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# THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

1821—1848

# THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

## 1821—1848

A HISTORY
OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES
FROM THE INDEPENDENCE OF MEXICO
TO THE CLOSE OF THE WAR
WITH THE UNITED STATES

BY
GEORGE LOCKHART RIVES

VOLUME II

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE OREGON QUESTION

THE extremely interesting details of the controversy between the United States and Great Britain over the ownership of what was once called the Oregon country—now the States of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho and the province of British Columbia—find no place in the present narrative. But the possibility that a war between the two countries might grow out of the controversy had a material influence in determining the course of successive Mexican governments toward the United States, and, to a less extent, the policy of President Polk's administration in reference to Mexico, so that the main outlines of the dispute must necessarily be sketched.

The first discoverers of the Pacific coast of America, north of the present limits of California, appear to have been the Spaniards—although Sir Francis Drake, in 1579, visited the coast and spent some time in a harbor which appears to have been that which is now known as Drake's Bay, a little north of San Francisco. But it was not until almost the end of the eighteenth century that the Spanish government made any serious efforts to explore the northwest coast. At about the same time the Russians, starting from the Asiatic coasts, were exploring toward the south and east, and seem to have examined the shores of the American continent to a point south of Sitka, overlapping the Spanish discoveries; and Captain Cook, who sailed on his third and last voyage of discovery from England in July, 1776, also visited the coast between California and Alaska. Later, the French exploring expedition under La Pérouse visited

various parts of those coasts between Mount Fairweather, in Alaska, and Monterey, in California.

But by the time of this voyage private enterprises had already begun to bring the northwest coast of America into general notice. The publication of the journals of Captain Cook's third voyage made known to English-speaking men the great possibilities of profit in the fur-trade, from America to China. In 1785 and 1786 British vessels sailed from London and Macao and Calcutta, bound for the northwest coast, and in 1787 the *Washington* and *Columbia* sailed from Boston to the same destination. By a sort of general understanding the fur-traders of both nationalities established their chief resort at Nootka Sound, on the western side of Vancouver's Island, where ships occasionally wintered.

In the spring of 1789 a Spanish exploring expedition, sent by the viceroy of Mexico to anticipate Russia in taking possession of the coast, found British and American vessels at anchor off Nootka, and after some hesitation seized two of the British ships and sent them as prizes to San Blas, in Mexico. The act caused intense excitement in England and the fitting out of a fleet destined to attack Spain. "The declared object," wrote Gouverneur Morris, then in London, "is to compel Spain to atone for an insult offered to Great Britain by capturing two vessels in Nootka Sound. . . . If Spain submits she may as well give up her American dominions; for the position advanced here is that nations have a right to take possession of any territory unoccupied." [1]

In the face of the determined attitude of Great Britain—"the uncommon celerity and unparalleled dispatch which attended the equipment of one of the noblest fleets that Great Britain ever saw"—and the unwillingness of France to back up Spain in its quarrel, there was nothing to do but to submit. By July 24, 1790, the King of Spain had agreed to make full restitution of the British vessels captured at Nootka Sound and to indemnify the owners and crews; and on October 28, 1790, a convention was signed at the Escurial by which the King further agreed to restore the

[1] Morris to Washington, May 29, 1790; *Amer. St. Papers, For. Rel.*, I, 123.

land and buildings of which the British fur-traders had been dispossessed, as also to admit the right of British subjects to navigate or carry on fisheries in the Pacific Ocean, and to land on the coast in places not already occupied, for the purpose of carrying on commerce with the natives of the country or of making settlements.

The Nootka Sound convention was principally important as marking a step in the downward course of the Spanish colonial policy. It had been forced upon the Spaniards solely by a sense of their inability to resist England single-handed, for the beginning of the French Revolution had left Spain without an ally; and indeed, some two years later, the arrest and execution of Louis XVI forced Spain into a temporary alliance with England. The alliance with England led to an agreement for the mutual abandonment of Nootka. By another convention, signed January 11, 1794, it was agreed that after a formal delivery to a British official of the "buildings and districts of land on the Northwest coast of North America, or the islands adjacent to that continent of which the subjects of His Britannic Majesty were dispossessed," the officials of the two crowns should "withdraw respectively their people from the said port of Nootka." Neither of the parties, it was agreed, should "form any permanent establishment in the said port or claim any right of sovereignty or territorial dominion there to the exclusion of the other." In accordance with this convention English and Spanish commissioners met at Nootka and carried out the ceremony of delivery of the "buildings and district of land" and the abandonment of the port; and thenceforward it remained deserted.[1]

The strain of the Napoleonic wars, followed at their close by disorders at home and accompanied by the revolt of the Spanish colonies, effectually prevented Spain from undertaking any new enterprises. From 1795 that government made no further efforts either to explore the northwest coast, or to push its colonies beyond the neighborhood

[1] An excellent monograph on the Nootka Sound controversy, by W. R. Manning, will be found in *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1904, 279–478.

of the bay of San Francisco, while at the same time Americans and Englishmen were making discoveries and giving the world extensive information concerning the whole Pacific coast of North America.

In January, 1791, Captain George Vancouver, who had been sent to Nootka to receive the buildings and tracts of land of which the subjects of his Britannic Majesty had been dispossessed, explored in considerable detail the whole of Puget Sound and the coasts of Vancouver's Island. He also examined and explored the coast from Cook's Inlet, in Alaska, as far south as San Diego, in California. Not long after arriving on the northwest coast Vancouver was informed by Captain Gray of the American ship *Columbia*—trading for furs—that he had taken his ship into the mouth of a large river, which he had ascended for some miles and had named the Columbia River, after his ship. On receiving Gray's account and his chart of the entrance, Vancouver sent his second in command, Captain Broughton, to the river, and Broughton found the entrance and explored the river more than a hundred miles from its mouth in October, 1792.

All this time the interior of the country on the Pacific slope, from the bay of San Francisco north, was practically unknown. Some of the Hudson's Bay people had penetrated it, and in the summer of 1793 Alexander MacKenzie had discovered the Fraser River and descended it to its mouth. But the American government was the first to attempt anything like an accurate and scientific exploration of the country. Immediately after the cession of Louisiana, the active mind of Jefferson had conceived the idea of taking steps to secure the Louisiana Purchase to its westernmost bounds. How far Louisiana extended in that direction was entirely a matter of conjecture, but Jefferson, anticipating Talleyrand's advice, was determined to make the most of his bargain.[1] The result was the expedition of Lewis and Clark, who descended the Columbia to the sea in 1805.

[1] "You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and I suppose you will make the most of it."—(Livingston to Madison, May 20, 1803; *Amer. St. Papers, For. Rel.*, II, 561.)

The following winter was passed by the explorers in camp at the mouth of the river, and in 1806 they made their way back, arriving at St. Louis near the end of September, 1806.

St. Louis at this time was the centre of the American fur-trade, and the news of Lewis and Clark's success in crossing the continent, and their reports as to the character of the country they had traversed, spread rapidly throughout the United States. Among other persons who took a lively interest in these reports was John Jacob Astor, a merchant of New York, who was endeavoring to establish an American company that should rival, in the United States, the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest Fur Companies of Canada. As a part of his plan he now resolved to plant a fort near the mouth of the Columbia River, a point which he believed could be reached either by sea or land for the purposes of the trade. Such an establishment, under the name of Astoria, was begun in 1811 upon a liberal scale, but the War of 1812 with Great Britain put an end to its existence.[1] The treaty of Ghent, which closed the war, provided, however, that "all territory, places and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, . . . shall be restored without delay," and under this provision Astoria was formally handed back to Captain Biddle, of the United States ship *Ontario*, on October 6, 1818.

At the beginning of the year 1819 the condition of things was therefore as follows: The Spaniards had made extensive voyages of discovery north of the present boundaries of California, but had failed to follow them up by continuous or permanent occupation. The Russians had explored the coast eastward and southward from Bering Strait, but had made no permanent settlements anywhere between what are now the northern limits of California and the southern limits of Alaska. A French expedition had surveyed the coast, but they too had made no attempt at settlement; and whatever rights France had possessed, either by reason of their maritime discoveries or by reason of their ownership

[1] Washington Irving's *Astoria* is, of course, the most entertaining, if not the most impartial, account of this settlement.

of what was called Louisiana, had been transferred to the United States by the treaty of 1803.

The only civilized nations who had made any attempts to occupy the country had been the United States and Great Britain. American and British ships had at various times visited and examined the coast and their crews had carried on trade with the natives. Both American citizens and British subjects had explored the interior and had discovered the courses of the principal rivers; but with the exception of fur-trading establishments of a more or less permanent character, neither party could assert anything like a settlement of the country.

By the Florida treaty of February 22, 1819, the shadowy claims of Spain were vested in the United States, who could thenceforward rely not only upon the discovery and exploration and occupation of a part of the Columbia River valley, but also upon all the rights which had ever belonged to Spain, including, of course, whatever rights Spain might possess under the Nootka Sound convention of 1794. France and Spain being eliminated, the possession of the whole northwest coast, from California to the Arctic Ocean, was thus left to be decided by the United States, Great Britain, and Russia.

The Russian boundaries were, however, soon settled by two treaties signed at St. Petersburg, one between the United States and Russia in 1824, and one between Great Britain and Russia in 1825, under which the southern boundary of Russian America was fixed at latitude 54° 40′ north. This left the United States and Great Britain as the sole claimants for a stretch of nearly nine hundred miles of coast between the latitudes of 42° and 54° 40′, besides all the wilderness back of it, with its vague and magnificent possibilities; and how that great region—which from this time forward was generally known as the Oregon country—was to be divided between the two claimants was the question at issue.[1]

[1] The name Oregon, as applied to this territory, was derived from the supposititious "Great River of the West," which Jonathan Carver, in his mythical

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THE OREGON COUNTRY

"Lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings."

[1] Gallatin and Rush to Secretary of State; *Amer. State Papers, For. Rel.*, IV, 881.

[2] *Ibid.*, V, 807.

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The treaty of Ghent in 1814 had left for future settlement the whole boundary westward of the Lake of the Woods, but an effort was made very soon afterward to dispose of that question. In the autumn of 1818 Gallatin and Rush, representing the United States, had a series of diplomatic conferences in London, which resulted in a treaty, dated October 20, 1818, providing in effect that this part of the boundary should for the present remain undetermined, and "that the country on the northwest coast, claimed by either party, should, without prejudice to the claims of either party and for a limited time be opened, for the purpose of trade, to the inhabitants of both countries."[1]

In the summer of 1823 instructions were sent to Mr. Rush, then American minister in London, to renew the effort to settle the boundary, and he was directed to propose the parallel of 51° north; but he was also informed that if the line of 49° was "earnestly insisted on" by Great Britain he might consent to that. Another long discussion followed, which ended by the British representatives offering to fix the boundary at the line of 49° north, from the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River, and thence down the Columbia to the sea. Rush said he was unable to accept the British proposal, but would agree to the line of 49° north, from the Rocky Mountains to the sea, which was "the extreme limit" to which he was authorized to go.[2] There the negotiations ended, the difference between the parties being now reduced to the triangle bounded by the parallel of 49° north, the Columbia River, and the sea.

In the spring of 1825 John Quincy Adams passed from the State Department to the White House, and in the next year efforts were again made to adjust the northwest boun-

*Travels Throughout the Interior Parts of North America*, published in 1778, mentioned as the Oregon or Origan. The name became a synonyme for remoteness and solitude—witness Bryant:

> "Lose thyself in the continuous woods
> Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
> Save his own dashings."

[1] Gallatin and Rush to Secretary of State; *Amer. State Papers, For. Rel.*, IV, 381.

[2] *Ibid.*, V, 557.

dary. Both parties renewed their previous offers of compromise, and both offered some slight additional advantages. But the concessions offered were not acceptable, and a new treaty was signed on August 6, 1827, by which all the boundary provisions of the treaty of 1818 were "indefinitely extended and continued in force," either party being at liberty, at any time after October 20, 1828, to annul and abrogate the agreement on giving twelve months' notice.[1]

Up to this time, the subject of the northwest coast had attracted little public attention either in America or in England, although to the officers and stockholders of the Hudson's Bay Company—which had consolidated with the Northwest Fur Company in 1820—the matter was of absorbing interest. That great monopoly had done its utmost to establish its posts throughout the country and to acquire and extend its influence over the natives; but "beyond the limits of the government offices, and of the Hudson's Bay house, no one in England seems to have taken the slightest interest in anything relating to North-West America."[2] Meanwhile, American fur-traders had practically abandoned the country. Astor, unable to get what he considered adequate support from the government, made no further attempt, after the close of the War of 1812, to extend his enterprises beyond the Rocky Mountains, and other American traders had suffered such hardships in their expeditions that for years they contented themselves with following up the head-waters of the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and the other streams on the Atlantic side of the mountains.

However, by about 1830 the American fur-traders managed to push farther and farther toward the Pacific. According to Washington Irving, the whole country between the Russian possessions in the north and the Spanish possessions in the south was in time "traversed and ransacked in every direction by bands of hunters and Indian traders; so that there is scarcely a mountain pass, or defile, that is not known and threaded in their restless migrations, nor a

[1] *Ibid.*, VI, 650–671, 691, 696.
[2] Greenhow, *Hist. of Oregon and California*, 373.

nameless stream that is not haunted by the lonely trapper."[1] But though the American traders and trappers penetrated the Oregon country, unlike their British rivals they had no permanent posts beyond the Rocky Mountains. The agents of the principal companies visited the region from time to time with supplies for the Indians and trappers, which they exchanged for furs to be sent back to St. Louis, but they did not remain.

While these obscure and lonely pioneers were exploring an empire, spasmodic efforts were making in Washington to ascertain and define the rights of the United States; but nothing effectual was done, and thus matters rested, and would doubtless have so continued for an indefinite period but for an important series of events over which neither the American nor the British governments had the slightest control—the beginning, namely, of extensive emigration overland from the United States into the Oregon territory. A few settlers had gone by sea in 1834, under the leadership of Methodist missionaries, and established themselves within the limits of the present state of Oregon, where some old employees of the Hudson's Bay Company had already begun farming. The land was fertile, and the new settlements prospered. In 1836 the American Board of Foreign Missions sent out several missionaries and their wives, who managed to make in safety the long journey overland; and from that time forward the number of emigrants steadily increased, the Oregon trail became better known, wagons were regularly taken over it, and in the spring of 1843 not less than a thousand people—men, women, and children—crossed the continent to find homes on the Pacific.

As soon as the American settlements in Oregon began to grow to a respectable size, the subject of the title to their lands and the protection of the people on their journey and in their new homes claimed the serious attention of the government. Unlike the British occupants of the soil, who were necessarily agents of the Hudson's Bay Company—for all other British subjects were excluded by the company's

[1] Washington Irving, *Bonneville's Adventures*, 22.

charter[1]—the Americans went as individuals intending to become permanent residents and land-owners, and the right to acquire title to land was of no less importance to them than the right to be protected by the armies and courts of justice of their country.

Following the first overland journeys of intending settlers, therefore, petitions began to be presented to Congress pointing out the situation of the settlers, urging relief, and urging as an essential means to that end an immediate adjustment with Great Britain, either by agreement or by taking forcible possession of the territory; and reports from the State and War Departments, reports from committees, and bills to provide for the protection of American citizens in Oregon, followed in increasing multiplicity. Congress, however, still did nothing, for the powers of Congress were limited. So long as the agreement with Great Britain remained in force, grants of land clearly could not be made, and the termination of the agreement or the making of a new one were necessarily executive acts. One thing indeed Congress might have done. It might have passed an act, similar to the British act of July 2, 1821 (1 and 2 Geo. IV, c. lxvi), extending the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the courts of the United States so as to apply to American citizens in the Oregon country; but even this was not done.

Lord Ashburton's mission in 1842 seemed to offer an excellent opportunity of effecting a compromise, and after his first conference with Webster he wrote home in April that he expected to settle the boundary by carrying the line down the Columbia. Unfortunately, his instructions forbade his agreeing to the line of 49° north, and failed to sug-

[1] By the original charter of the Hudson's Bay Company of May 16, 1669, all of the King's subjects who were not authorized by the corporation were forbidden to "visit, haunt, frequent, trade, traffic or adventure" within the territory allotted to *The Governor and Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay*. By crown grants of 1821 and 1838 (made after the merger with the Northwest Fur Company) "no British subjects, other than and except the said Governor and Company, and their successors, and the persons authorized to carry on exclusive trade by them, shall trade with the Indians during the period of this our grant, within the limits aforesaid," etc. See text of these documents in Greenhow, 465–476.

gest any basis of compromise as between the former offers of the two parties. It was apparent, of course, that a compromise of some sort must be found. Both parties had fully stated their arguments, but neither of them had found any clear legal basis upon which the title to the territory could have been adjudicated. The facts as to early discovery and occupation were not fully ascertainable. The rules of international law applicable to the case were vague and unsettled. Arbitration could not hopefully be looked to, for arbitrators could have done no more in such a case than make a bargain between the parties, which the parties could better make for themselves; and a partition of the country was therefore, in 1842, the only conceivable mode of settling the question, since neither party would have yielded the whole territory without a war.

Webster talked of accepting the Columbia River for the boundary, if an arrangement could be made by which Mexico would sell San Francisco Bay to the United States. Great Britain expressed no objection to that plan, but did not offer to help the United States to carry their point with the Mexican government. Webster, however, soon modified his views. He never professed to think that questions of strict legal right were involved, and he saw that an agreement for partition must of necessity be based upon a consideration of the respective convenience of the two parties. As a New Englander he was much concerned about the harbors on the Pacific; so that when the Wilkes exploring expedition returned in June, 1842, with their reports of the dangerous bar at the mouth of the Columbia and the excellent harbors in Puget Sound, his thoughts again reverted to the advantages of a line on 49° north.

Writing to Everett in the autumn, after the Ashburton negotiations had been ended and the treaty signed without any reference to the northwest boundary, Webster explained fully what difficulties there had been in the way. If an adjustment was to be made, he said, it was hard for him to see in what form or on what principle this could be done. The Columbia River, of course, offered a convenient line of

division, but then the navigation was very uncertain and inconvenient. If the United States were limited by the river, it would not have one tolerable harbor on the whole coast, as all the good harbors between the Russian settlements and California were on Puget Sound. England, no doubt, wanted a good harbor in the sound, but she might also want the privilege of transporting furs and other commodities down the river.

"I suppose it is an object with her to retain the settlement at Vancouver[1] and the other small settlements further north, under her jurisdiction and protection. Does she want any more? I doubt whether she can contemplate any considerable colonisation in the regions. I doubt exceedingly, whether it be an inviting country for agricultural settlers. At present there are not above seven hundred white persons on the whole territory, both sides the river, from California to latitude 54, north." [2]

Webster again reverted to the subject in another letter to Everett on January 29, 1843, where he discussed the possibility of a sale of all of Upper California to the United States, a part of the purchase money to be devoted to paying the claims of American citizens and a part to paying the claims of British subjects against Mexico.[3]

But Webster was not to remain much longer in the State Department, and Tyler thought (perhaps wisely) that the joint occupation might well be suffered to continue, and that time was on the side of the United States,[4] an opinion which Calhoun fully shared. Nevertheless, the subject of Oregon could not decently be ignored altogether, especially as the British government was now proposing a new negotiation;[5]

[1] Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River.

[2] Webster to Everett, Nov. 28, 1842; *Webster's Private Corr.*, II, 154.

[3] See Schaefer, "The British Attitude toward the Oregon Question," *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XVI, 203–204, note 61.

[4] Tyler to Calhoun, Oct. 7, 1845; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.*, 1899, II, 1059.

[5] "It has appeared to Her Majesty's Government that both parties would act wisely in availing themselves of so auspicious a moment to endeavor to bring to a settlement the only remaining subject of territorial difference. . . . I speak of the line of boundary West of the Rocky Mountains. . . . You will propose to Mr. Webster to move the President to furnish the United States

and the President in his annual message in December, 1842, informed Congress that, although the difficulty might not for several years to come involve the peace of the two countries, he would not delay to urge on Great Britain the importance of an early settlement.

Aberdeen was very indignant at the President's way of putting it. "You must know by this time," he wrote to a friend, "why I expressed myself greatly dissatisfied with the message of the President. The manner in which he treated the subject of the Right of Search was really scandalous. His mention of the Oregon question was also most uncandid. When he talked of pressing us to enter into negotiation, he had in his pocket a most friendly overture from us, which he had already answered favourably."[1]

What Tyler intended, and what Webster would have liked, was to send the latter on a special mission to England, but the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives refused to report an appropriation for that purpose.[2] Webster next tried to persuade Everett to go on the new and important mission to China so that he might take his place, but without success. At last in May, 1843, Webster resigned; the interregnum under Legaré followed; Upshur was not appointed Secretary of State until the end of July, and it was not until October 8, 1843, that instructions were at last sent to Everett to open negotiations in London. But by that time Aberdeen had become tired of waiting and had arranged to send Pakenham, for many years the

Minister at this Court with such instructions as will enable him to enter upon the negotiation of this matter with such person as may be appointed by Her Majesty for that object; and you will assure him, at the same time, that we are prepared to proceed to a consideration of it in a perfect spirit of fairness, and to adjust it on a basis of equitable compromise."—(Aberdeen to Fox, Oct. 18, 1842; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 139.)

[1] Aberdeen to J. W. Croker, Feb. 25, 1843; Croker's *Corr. and Diaries*, II, 189. The President had instructed Webster the previous autumn to say that he entirely concurred in the expediency of negotiations in regard to the Oregon territory; that he would express this opinion in his message to Congress, and that instructions would be sent to the American minister in London "at no distant day."—(Webster to Fox, Nov. 25, 1842; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 140.)

[2] Adams's *Memoirs*, XI, 330, Feb. 28, 1843. The vote of the committee was 6 to 3 against the appropriation.

British minister to Mexico, to undertake the business in Washington.

When Pakenham reached his new post, early in the year 1844, the difficulties in the way of a compromise had been greatly increased. The state legislatures were beginning to pass militant resolutions, public opinion in the United States was becoming inflamed, and the Senate had been doing what it could to embarrass the negotiations by passing a bill (which failed in the House) for establishing forts and making grants of land in Oregon. The eternal question of slavery also began to complicate the question. McDuffie and Calhoun had opposed the Senate bill, and their action was attributed in the North to the unwillingness of South Carolina to see the area of freedom extended; so that when Calhoun, somewhat later, warned the country of the danger of war with Great Britain, he was fiercely attacked by the great abolitionist poet. In his lines "To a Southern Statesman" Whittier contrasted Calhoun's course in respect to Oregon and in respect to Texas. "Is this thy voice?" he asked:

> "Is this thy voice whose treble notes of fear
> Wail in the wind? And dost thou shake to hear
> Actæon-like the bay of thine own hounds,
> Spurning the leash and leaping o'er their bounds,
> Sore baffled statesmen?
> It may be
> That the roused spirits of Democracy
> May leave to newer States the same wide door
> Through which thy slave-cursed Texas entered in."

Congress met in December, 1843, and the President's message once more called attention to the fact that the boundary of the Oregon territory was still in dispute; that propositions for settlement and final adjustment had been submitted to the British government without result; that the American minister in London had been instructed to bring the subject again to the consideration of the British government; and that every proper expedient would be resorted to in order to bring the negotiations to a speedy and

happy determination. In the meantime he had recommended that, inasmuch as many American citizens were either already established in the territory or were on the way thither for the purpose of forming permanent settlements, military posts be established along the line of travel so as to furnish protection against hostile tribes of Indians. "Our laws," he added, "should also follow them, so modified as the circumstances of the case may seem to require."

These suggestions involved doing no more than what the British government had, in effect, done for the Hudson's Bay Company and its servants; but they were by no means enough for Congress, and in March, 1844, Senator Semple, of Illinois, precipitated a debate by offering a resolution requesting the President to give notice terminating the joint occupation convention of 1827. Upon this a long and excited discussion arose in the Senate, in the course of which Senator Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, made a vehement speech advocating the passage of the resolution, asserting his belief that the United States "had a clear and conclusive title to the whole of the territory—to every foot of it—from the latitude of 42 to the latitude of 54.40 north," and asserting that the object of the British government was to delay as long as possible the settlement of a question which the American people would never suffer to sleep. This eloquence of Buchanan and other congressional orators was of course intended for its effect upon the coming presidential election, and, no doubt, was so received by the Senate and the country at large; but as the commercial states were manifesting uneasiness over the possibility of war with England, the motion for giving notice was defeated by a vote of 28 to 18.

When the nominating conventions of the two parties met in May, 1844, the question of Oregon was therefore still undecided, although the American government had repeatedly indicated a willingness to divide the territory with Great Britain upon the basis of the line of 49° north latitude. This would have given to the United States seven degrees of coast as against five and two-thirds degrees to Great Britain,

and would also have given to the United States both sides of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, the southern half of Vancouver's Island, and the whole of Puget Sound. To any such proposition, however, Great Britain thus far had shown no readiness to listen. The Whig convention, as has been seen, was silent on the subject of Oregon; but the Democratic platform, adopting the most extreme view, declared that "our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable," and that no part of it ought to be ceded to England or any other power.

As the presidential campaign progressed, the irresponsible talk about "the whole of Oregon" and "Fifty-four-forty or fight" became louder and more dangerous. Public opinion, not correctly informed, became accustomed to the talk of war with England; and, on the other hand, the British public, who cared nothing whatever about Oregon for its own sake, were being daily irritated by violent and abusive language that was repeated with malicious pleasure by the British press. "Our cousin Jonathan is an offensive, arrogant fellow in his manner," wrote so friendly a critic as Lord Ashburton. "By nearly all our people he is therefore hated, and a treaty of conciliation with such a fellow, however considered by prudence or policy to be necessary, can in no case be very popular with the multitude." [1]

But if the multitude in Great Britain disliked Brother Jonathan's swagger and arrogance, the American public had equally good reason to dislike John Bull. For years before the election of 1844 volume after volume of travels in America which had appeared in England and been reprinted in America touched and irritated every sensitive fibre of national self-consciousness. The criticisms were not the less offensive because they were often just. The hearty contempt and abuse of Mrs. Trollope, Captain Hamilton, and Charles Dickens were sometimes less hard to bear than the patronizing condescension of other writers. Slavery was universally denounced in terms that exasperated the South; and the dirt, discomforts of travel, manner of speech,

[1] Ashburton to Croker, Nov. 25, 1842; Croker's *Corr. and Diaries*, II, 188

and rawness of a new country were held up to the ridicule of the world in a manner that could hardly fail to offend the whole nation. Most of these productions are forgotten, but one work of genius survives. It is perhaps not too much to say that the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit* did more than almost any other one thing to drive the United States and England in the direction of war.

It was under such discouraging circumstances that Pakenham began his Oregon negotiations. He had written to Upshur soon after arriving in Washington of the anxiety of the British government to come to "an early and satisfactory arrangement" with respect to the boundaries of Oregon. Upshur had replied, asking Pakenham to call on the morning of the twenty-seventh of February, but on the day following their preliminary conversation Upshur was killed.[1]

Both Tyler and Calhoun were in favor of letting the discussion rest, but as the former remarked at a later day, "a clamour was raised in relation to the Subject throughout the country, which was loudest in the west, and nothing seemed to remain but that negotiation should be attempted."[2] It was not until the twenty-third of August, in the early days of the presidential campaign, that the discussion was begun. Calhoun's real purpose was to gain time; "to do nothing to excite attention," as he explained, "and leave time to operate."[3] The purpose of the British government was quite the opposite. They were, in reality, very indifferent as to the fate of Oregon, but they were very much concerned indeed as to a war with their best customer. "It is," wrote Everett, "the result of the closest consideration I have been able to give it, that the present government, though of course determined not to make any discreditable sacrifice of what they consider their rights, are really willing to agree to reasonable terms of settlement." But what Everett regarded as reasonable terms were much beyond

[1] Pakenham to Upshur, Feb. 24, 1844; Upshur to Pakenham, Feb. 26, 1844; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 140.

[2] Tyler to Calhoun, Oct. 7, 1845; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, II, 1059.

[3] Calhoun to Mason, May 30, 1845; *ibid.*, II, 660.

what Pakenham's official instructions authorized him to agree to.[1] A negotiation begun under such circumstances was necessarily futile. The American representative only wanted to gain time; the British representative had nothing to offer but what he was well advised would be rejected. Nevertheless, the forms of a discussion were gone through with, and written statements of the claims of the parties having been exchanged, the conferences came to an end, without any conclusion having been reached, on September 24, 1844.[2]

Early in the following winter Pakenham notified Calhoun that, although he had submitted the written statements and the protocols of the conferences to the British government, he had not yet received instructions on the several points which had been chiefly discussed.[3] The British government, of course, had delayed instructions to Pakenham, because it was waiting to see precisely what was to be looked for from the new administration, and it did not have long to wait. The inaugural of President Polk was perfectly explicit on the subject of Oregon. He considered it, he said, his duty to assert and maintain the rights of the United States "to that portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky Mountains."

> "Our title to the country of the Oregon," he continued, "is 'clear and unquestionable' and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children. . . . The world beholds the peaceful triumphs of the industries of the immigrants. To us belongs the duty of protecting them adequately wherever they may be upon our soil."

The President's use of quotation marks showed that he was merely reasserting before his own countrymen the doc-

[1] Everett to Upshur, Dec. 2, 1843; *State Dept. MSS.* As to Pakenham's instructions, see Aberdeen to Pakenham, Dec. 28, 1843; same to same (private), March 4, 1844; quoted in Schaefer's "British Attitude toward the Oregon Question," *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XVI, 295.

[2] Protocols of the conferences are printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 142–145; statements of claims, *ibid.*, 146–161.

[3] Pakenham to Calhoun, Jan. 15, 1845; Calhoun to Pakenham, Jan. 21, 1845; *ibid.*, 161–162.

larations of the Baltimore convention; but the voice of a president, as he soon discovered, resounds loudly through the world, and his words seemed to proclaim him unalterably opposed to any compromise with Great Britain. That impression was heightened by the appointment as Secretary of State of Mr. Buchanan, who had so vehemently asserted in the Senate the "clear and conclusive title" of the United States to every foot of the territory of Oregon from latitude 49° to latitude 54° 40′, and had so fiercely proclaimed the unchanging purposes of the American nation. The loud talk of Western senators, and of the Democrats generally, during the presidential campaign, naturally attracted very unfavorable attention in England; and the opposition party in Parliament took up the President's message, with a view to attacking and discrediting Peel's government. On the fourth of April, 1845, simultaneous assaults were made by the leaders—Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, and Lord Clarendon in the House of Lords.

Sir Robert Peel, for the government, could only say in the Commons that negotiations were still progressing, and that he did not despair of a favorable result. He did, however, express great regret that the President should have referred in a public address to any other contingency than that of a friendly termination of all difficulties; and he ended by declaring that her Majesty's government considered that "we too have rights respecting this territory of Oregon which are 'clear and unquestionable.' . . . We are resolved —and we are prepared—to maintain them."[1]

In the House of Lords, Aberdeen explained that the time had not yet come for publishing the diplomatic correspondence. Negotiations were proceeding, and so lately as the nineteenth of February, President Tyler, in a message to the Senate, had expressed himself as hopeful of an early and amicable conclusion. President Polk's inaugural address was not an official act of which foreign countries could take note. Her Majesty's government intended to continue negotiations in a manner consistent with justice,

[1] Hansard, LXXIX, 178.

reason, moderation, and common-sense. They were willing to make the greatest sacrifices to maintain peace, but there were limits which must not be passed. "We too, my lords," he concluded, amid the loud cheers of the House, "have rights which are 'clear and unquestionable,' and these rights, with the blessing of God and your support, we are ready to maintain." [1]

It was only too clear that the utterances of the President and his Secretary of State—not to speak of the other orators in Congress and out, or of the newspapers throughout the country—had succeeded in stirring up a dangerous spirit in England. The ownership of the Oregon territory was, in itself, a minor matter, but questions of national honor were beginning to be asked which might easily excite a feeling under whose influence the subject could never have been amicably settled.

Under such very unfavorable conditions of temper on both sides, the interrupted conferences in relation to Oregon were resumed in the middle of the summer of 1845, and at the first of these, Buchanan presented his statement of the legal grounds upon which the United States claimed all that portion of the Oregon territory between the valley of the Columbia River, and the southern line of Alaska, which, he said, rested on discovery, exploration, and possession. But the President, Buchanan continued, found himself embarrassed, if not committed, by the acts of his predecessors, who had uniformly proceeded upon the principle of compromise in all their negotiations. He had, therefore, determined to pursue the present negotiation upon the same principle, and to make one more effort to adjust this long-pending controversy, and he again proposed the line of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude.[2]

To this communication Pakenham returned a long reply, in which he said that he did not feel at liberty to accept Buchanan's proposal, for the reason that it offered less than what had been [illegible]ndered by the American government, and declined by the British government in 1826, and he

[1] *Ibid.*, 115. [2] Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 145, 163–169.

ended by the unlucky statement, that he trusted "the American plenipotentiary will be prepared to offer some further proposal for the settlement of the Oregon question more consistent with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectations of the British government." [1] Having thus slammed the door in Buchanan's face, Pakenham comfortably waited for the next move by the American government, and so matters rested during the remainder of the summer of 1845.

[1] Pakenham to Buchanan, July 29, 1845; *Ibid.*, 170–177.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE PROBLEMS OF CALIFORNIA

SOME account has been given in a previous chapter of the colonisation and early history of California. We are now to inquire what was the condition of that country near the time of President Polk's inauguration, and what were the views of the United States and other foreign nations in respect to that fertile and far-spreading domain.

On the whole, life in California bore much the same aspect, at least upon the surface, during the first twenty-five years after independence as during the twenty-five years before; and yet there had been changes of an important kind, which were far from being changes for the better. Three developments from early colonial conditions were chiefly significant:

1. The increase in the English-speaking part of the population.

2. The destruction of the missions.

3. The growth of a home-rule sentiment, accompanied by distrust and dislike of Mexican authority.

The total Mexican and Indian population, in 1825, amounted to perhaps 3,500 of the former, and 20,000 of the latter. In 1831 an apparently accurate statement gave 4,342 for the Mexicans and foreigners, and 18,683 for the Indians.[1] By 1845 the Mexican population was estimated at about 6,200, showing a tolerably high rate of growth in twenty years.[2] Only a very little of this was due to immigration from Mexico. No man came thence except under

[1] Forbes, *California*, 202.

[2] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 649. His figures are 6,900 for the *gente de razon*, of whom 680 were foreigners. This would leave 6,220 for the Mexican population.

compulsion, or for wages. There were some civil officials, some soldiers, a few convicts, and a very few subsidized colonists. It was not because the Mexican government discouraged emigration. On the contrary, they made repeated promises of grants of land and money to promote it, but they simply failed to attract settlers. The growth in the Mexican population was, therefore, almost entirely accounted for by the natural increase of a prolific race, living in a healthy climate, where the means of existence were extraordinarily abundant.

But if Mexican citizens were slow to seek their fortunes in California, there were men in plenty from elsewhere, who came eagerly and without asking either help or permission from any governmental authority. There were very few of these foreigners in 1825, and there were perhaps one hundred and fifty in 1830, and six hundred and eighty in 1845.[1] Some came by sea, including all the first-comers, but as early perhaps as 1825 trappers, in the employment of the great fur companies of Canada and the United States, began to arrive over the mountains. "After 1826 an army of hunters, increasing from hundreds to thousands, frequented the fur-producing streams of the interior, and even the valleys of California, flitting hither and thither, individuals and parties, large or small, according to the disposition of the natives, wandering without other motive than the hope of more abundant game, well acquainted with the country, as is the wont of trappers, but making no maps and keeping no diaries."[2]

In most cases, the visits of these men were contrary to the Mexican law. By a decree of May 1, 1828, no foreigner could lawfully enter Mexican territory without a passport, nor could he remain more than a month unless he obtained a license (*carta de seguridad*), which must be renewed from year to year,[3] and few Americans or Canadians troubled themselves about passports. Of course the law was never consistently enforced, and numbers of trappers and traders continued to make their way overland, some from Oregon,

[1] *Ibid.*, V, 524. [2] *Ibid.*, III, 151–152. [3] Dublan y Lozano, II, 69.

some over the Sierra Nevada, and some by way of the Gila River from New Mexico. Deserters from foreign ships also helped to swell the population.

Undesirable as most of these men were, they were not much troubled by the authorities; and indeed the people of California seem generally to have had much less objection to Englishmen and Americans than to Mexicans.[1] This regard for foreigners was due, at least in part, to the fact that many of them were respectable people who married in the country, and through a degree of energy and enterprise quite unknown to the natives became reputable and influential citizens. The resident English and Americans had in their hands the greater part of the trade of the country.[2]

But if the numbers of the Spanish and English-speaking people, the *gente de razon*, had increased, the numbers of the semi-civilised mission Indians had fallen off to a remarkable degree. This was almost entirely due to the successful efforts of the secular authorities to do away with the missions. In theory the Spanish missions were by no means permanent institutions, but were temporary schools for the training of the Indians in the arts of civilization. The aim of the regular clergy professed to be the transformation of these naked nomads into a God-fearing, laborious, settled peasantry; and in Upper California the Franciscans had had an undoubted measure of success, far greater, for instance, than was ever attained by the missionaries in Texas. But in spite of its successes the church was never willing to admit that its task was finished, or that the Indians were ready to become citizens. On the other hand, the liberal and anti-clerical parties, both in Spain and in Mexico, quite irrespective of any evidence to the contrary, asserted that the neophytes were ready for citizenship, and must be rescued as soon as possible from a condition of quasi-slavery.

As early as September 13, 1813, the Spanish Cortes decreed that all missions, within ten years after their foundation,

[1] Bancroft, *California*, III, 307.

[2] Interesting contemporary foreign accounts of life in California about this time will be found in Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, Forbes's *California*, and Robinson's *Life in California*.

must be converted into pueblos, or villages, and become subject to secular authority, both in civil and religious affairs. It seems probable that the existence of this decree was unknown in California until years after its enactment, a fact not so surprising when it is remembered that the whole of Mexico was at that time in the very midst of the war of independence, and that neither Spaniards nor Mexicans were ever able to establish regular or certain means of communication between California and the capital.[1] At any rate, it was not until 1825 that the first steps toward secularising the missions were taken. In that year Echeandía, the first governor under the republic, issued an edict authorizing married Indians who had some means of gaining a livelihood, and who had been Christians for fifteen years, or since childhood, to assume all the right of Mexican citizens and to leave the missions freely. This experiment was not, however, very successful, and apparently had very limited application.[2]

The question of secularization now became involved with the policy of expulsion of Spanish subjects from Mexican territory—the friars being for the most part native Spaniards—and also, to some extent, with the question of the recognition of the republic by the Roman church. These were matters in which the Mexican authorities felt much interest, but the inhabitants of California none at all. The latter were at that time by no means eager to break up the mission establishments, for it was thought that the friars were the only people who could control the Indians and make them work, and that if the friars were expelled the Mexican colonists would be exposed to Indian raids, and the chief resources of the country in cattle and crops would be cut off. Indeed, in a country so thinly settled, with an indolent population, with a small military force, and with a chronically impoverished government, secularization presented very real difficulties.

Governor Echeandía, nevertheless, who seems to have been possessed of a strong anti-clerical bias, believed that

[1] Bancroft, *California*, II, 399. [2] *Ibid.*, III, 102.

secularization could be accomplished. In 1829 he prepared and sent to the supreme government a project for secularizing the missions, which was at first favorably received by the Mexican authorities.[1] But by the end of the year Guerrero's government was out and Bustamante, with his reactionary and despotic notions, was in. One of the first acts of the new administration was to order Echeandía to make no change in the mission system, and a new governor, one Manuel Victoria, was appointed. Echeandía, however, was not the man to be stopped in his career of reform either by the facts of the case or by the orders of his superiors; and as Governor Victoria was in no hurry to take up his office, Echeandía, without any legal authority whatever, had the opportunity to issue a decree of secularization. The friars very naturally declined to obey, more especially as the new governor did at last land at San Diego soon after the decree was issued. As soon as he reached Monterey the decree was rescinded.

Echeandía, however, was not yet at the end of his resources. Visions of plunder had begun to awaken new hopes in the minds of some of the younger Californians, and with their aid the garrison of San Diego was induced to pronounce in favor of Echeandía. Victoria thereupon raised an "army" of thirty men and met the revolutionists near Los Angeles; but one of his men being killed, and he himself wounded, he surrendered and was sent back to Mexico. By this time the Federal government had formally disapproved Echeandía's decree of secularization, although, evidently with the intention of conciliating anticlerical sentiment, it had directed that the question be closely studied in order to ascertain what missions were in a condition to be secularized according to the Spanish law of 1813, and to prepare such a plan as might be deemed most expedient. Incidentally, another governor of California, General José Figueroa, was appointed, who entered upon the discharge of his duties in January, 1833. Profiting by the experience of his predecessor, he lost no time in ban-

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 302.

ishing Echeandía from California, and the latter disappears from history.

Figueroa took no active steps against the missions. His reports to the government were, however, highly unfavorable to the friars. He described the mission Indians as held in a degrading servitude, and as untaught in letters or even in the simplest arts of agriculture. If set free he believed they would be beggars, and would soon relapse to barbarism and join the wild Indians in stealing horses and cattle for sale to New Mexicans and foreigners. He therefore advised against any sudden or radical change, while favoring partial and experimental reforms at some of the older missions.[1]

But before these reports could have reached the city of Mexico Bustamante, in his turn, was out and Farías and his *doctrinaire* associates were administering the federal government; and they made haste, in the midst of their other activities, to settle the mission question. By a law passed August 20, 1833, the Mexican Congress directed the government to secularize all the missions in the two Californias. In the place of each mission a parish church was to be established, which was to be in charge of a member of the secular clergy having a fixed salary. The mission buildings, other than the churches, were to be converted into priests' houses, schools, offices for the ayuntamientos and other public establishments. The lands and cattle were to be distributed among the Indians belonging to the mission.[2]

This law merely authorised the government to act, but both men and money were scarce, and until the government found the new priests, and provided the funds to carry on the new parishes, it was not easy to see what the authorities in California could do. At first they drifted, but on August 9, 1834, they passed a decree of the local legislature placing the missions under the control of the civil authorities, and

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 325, 328.

[2] Dublan y Lozano, II, 542. See also the law of April 16, 1834, which secularised all the missions in the several states; *ibid.*, 689. This law had no application to the Californias, which were *territorios*.

granting parcels of the mission lands to the Indians in severalty.[1]

Almost simultaneously with this decree the central government attempted to deal with the mission lands in another way, by authorizing the formation of a company which was to colonize and develop this property. To that end, the government undertook to give money, free transportation, tools, and rations for a year to every colonist sent out by the company, besides an allotment of land and cattle from the property of the missions. Something over two hundred and fifty people were enlisted for the new colony upon the strength of the government's offers. They started from the city of Mexico in April, 1834, while Farias was still in power, and nearly two hundred and fifty reached Monterey in the autumn of that same year, in spite of some losses by death and desertion on the long and toilsome journey.[2] But their plans came to nothing. Santa Anna had taken the government out of the hands of Farias soon after the expedition started, and as a part of his general policy of undoing whatever Farias had done, Santa Anna sent orders overland to California revoking the concessions made to the new settlers. The enterprise was thus wrecked. The leaders of the party were deported soon after their arrival, and the colonists were sent as quasi-prisoners to Solano, north of the Bay of San Francisco, where they were detained for some time, a part of them ultimately returning to Mexico and the rest being scattered among the old residents of California.[3]

The next year the federal government, by an act of Congress of November 7, 1835, directed that secularization under the law of August 20, 1833, should be suspended until the new parish priests were ready to take charge;[4] but as the process of secularization in California under the local regulations of August 9, 1834, had already considerably progressed, and receivers for some of the missions had been appointed long before the new law was known, the latter was never obeyed. Indeed by the summer of 1836 only

[1] Bancroft, *California*, III, 342.
[2] *Ibid.*, 275-281, 286-290.
[3] *Ibid.*, 289-289, 344.
[4] Dublan y Lozano, III, 96.

two missions were left in their original condition, and by the beginning of 1837 the missions of San José and Santa Clara, the two remaining, were turned over to the civil authorities.[1]

From this time forward the process of secularization seems to have been made easier by the fact that it met with no opposition. The friars appear to have lost heart, and to have become convinced that disaster could not be averted; and they were even accused of stripping the missions of their property as far as possible, which, of course, meant slaughtering the cattle and converting their hides and tallow into money.[2]

The method of carrying out the regulations of 1834 was to appoint a *comisionado*, or receiver, for each mission, whose duty it was to distribute the lands and cattle among the Indians belonging to the mission, to superintend the formation of village government, to get in the crops, and to dispose of such property as was not to be distributed to the neophytes. To do this successfully would obviously have required "the employment of able and honest administrators, a degree of intelligence on the part of the neophytes, the hearty co-operation of the missionaries, a strong and watchful territorial government, a healthful, intelligent, and liberal public spirit, and freedom from sectional strife. All these conditions being more or less wanting, success was impossible. Failure was a foregone conclusion."[3]

The first difficulty was doubtless the most serious. It was impossible to find administrators for the several missions who were both able and honest. Those who were honest were incompetent or stupid; those who were able were not honest; and some were both vicious and incompetent. Accounts were not kept, or if kept, were useless. The governor and other territorial officials were permitted to use the cattle and grain of the missions as if it were government property, or their own, and "loans" of cattle were made to friends. The Indians were permitted to relapse into barbarism. Some of them were kept together and at

[1] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 47.
[2] *Ibid.*, IV, 44.
[3] *Ibid.*, III, 220-348, *passim*.

work much as in former years; but those to whom cattle or tools were given converted them as fast as possible into liquor, and lived by begging and stealing; and when these resources failed, some went back to work, while many drifted off to join the wild Indians of the interior.[1]

The net result was that by 1840 the mission Indians had decreased from fifteen thousand or eighteen thousand to five thousand or six thousand; cattle from one hundred and forty thousand to fifty thousand; and sheep from one hundred and thirty thousand to fifty thousand.[2] Three years later, what poor remnants were left of the mission property and the mission Indians, were turned back to the church; but it was too late to restore the past, and the whole mission system may be considered to have come completely to an end. Several of the missions had been destroyed, and some were totally abandoned; and in 1845 the mission lands and buildings were ordered to be sold, or rented for a term of years.[3]

Contemporaneously with the destruction of the missions, there developed in California a strong separatist or home-rule sentiment, which expressed itself in open revolution on a petty scale, and in a general and quite freely expressed dissatisfaction with the Mexican government. There was evident and abundant cause for such dissatisfaction. The attempt to administer the affairs of the territory from the distant capital, and by a government so ill-informed, so impoverished, and so utterly inefficient as that of Mexico, was bound to be a failure. It is true that the people of California were not oppressed; but they were neglected, and they did not love the politicians who were sent from time to time to rule over them. The result was a hostile feeling which, in 1836, broke out into something that might be called a revolution.

[1] *Ibid.*, 90-92.

[2] *Ibid.*, 92. Forbes's figures show much greater numbers of sheep and cattle in 1831.—(*California*, 265.)

[3] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 309; Richman, *California*, 283-285. The subject of missions in California, the process of secularization, and the title to mission lands, is discussed at length by the Supreme Court of California in the case of *Nobili v. Redman*, 6 Cal., 235.

Figueroa had died the year before; his successor, Chico, had been forced or persuaded to return to Mexico, and a certain Nicolás Gutierres was acting governor. His overthrow was mainly the work of three men, Vallejo, Alvarado, and José Castro.

Of these three, Mariano Guadelupe Vallejo seems to have been much the most capable. He was the son of one of the soldiers who landed in California in 1769—a man of good family who had volunteered for the expedition. Don Mariano was the eighth of the emigrant's thirteen children, and was born at Monterey, in 1808. Before he was thirty years old he had come into possession of a large tract of land, in the neighborhood of Sonoma, and many cattle; and he was shrewd enough to keep himself out of the way of the various disturbances in other parts of California, while he lent his name, or at least his influence, to his nephew, Alvarado, and was recognized as military commander of the department.[1]

Juan Bautista Alvarado, who was born in California in 1809, was the son of a sergeant in the Spanish troops. His mother was María Josefa Vallejo, a sister of Don Mariano. Alvarado had not much education, but a good deal of practical ability, and he acquired great popularity and influence with all his countrymen. He was for a time employed as a clerk to a merchant in Monterey, and for a time was employed in the custom-house. Sir George Simpson, who visited Monterey early in 1842, thought that Alvarado possessed little of the talent and decision of his uncle, being "more remarkable for love of conviviality than for anything else."

José Castro, the third Californian leader, was the son of a corporal and the grandson of a sergeant in the Spanish army, and was born about 1810. He had had the same sort of education as Alvarado, and does not seem to have had any particular occupation except to serve for several terms as member of the *diputación*, or territorial legislature. As

[1] "Pioneer Spanish Families in California," *Century Magazine*, XLI, 377–389 (Jan. 1891).

presiding officer of that body he was governor of California *ad interim* from September, 1835, to January, 1836.

The revolt was begun by Alvarado and Castro alone, Vallejo taking no active part, although his name was freely used by the promoters. The movement professed to be in support of the Constitution of 1824, just as the Texan rising of the previous year had been in support of that instrument; and in so far as there was any real justification for a resort to arms, it was to be found in a resistance to the Centralist revolution, which Santa Anna and his successors had by this time carried through, and which was causing revolts in all the outlying parts of Mexico. "Federation or Death!" was the cry of the Californian leaders, but, as later events abundantly proved, their only object was to secure the offices for themselves.

The physical force employed on both sides was ridiculously small, when considered with reference to the size of the country or the serious consequences involved. The "Vánguard of the Division of Operations," as the conspirators chose to call themselves, numbered about a hundred, of whom twenty-five or thirty were Englishmen and Americans, mostly sailors who had deserted their ships. But among these foreigners there were some half a dozen trappers, who were excellent riflemen. The leader of the foreign legion was Isaac Graham, a native Tennesseean, who cared no more for a Mexican than for an Indian, and whose business at this particular time consisted in running a sort of "moonshine" distillery near San Juan.

On the evening of November 3, 1837, the revolutionary "army," with José Castro at its head, arrived in Monterey, and lost no time in taking possession of the Castillo, which was not defended. Governor Gutierres, who had about fifty Mexican soldiers and twenty-five volunteers, was in the presidio, a row of two-story adobe buildings not far off. The insurrectos appear to have been aided by the foreign traders in the village, and they certainly got some powder from two or three of the merchant vessels in the port, although it was not any part of their plans to put California

under foreign control. "California for the Californians" was their real purpose. In addition to getting powder given them, they were also lucky enough to find a cannon-ball which would fit one of the guns in the castle, and early the next morning they fired off this gun at the presidio and knocked a hole in the roof. This shot settled the business. Twenty-nine of the garrison deserted, the rest insisted on a surrender, and after much letter-writing and the holding of a council of war in the presidio the governor surrendered. A few days later he sailed away with about seventy companions, some of them Mexican officials and some of them discontented colonists, and he too disappears from history.

By a proclamation issued November 13, 1836, Alvarado declared himself governor of California, Vallejo military commander, and Castro prefect of Monterey. California was declared to be a free and sovereign state, which would remain separate from Mexico until the Centralist government was overthrown and the Constitution of 1824 was again adopted by all the Mexican states. Thenceforward none but native Californians (*hijos del país*) were to have the offices.[1]

The southern part of California still remained to be reckoned with, for the people of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Diego had had no share in the revolution and were chronically jealous of the people of Monterey. There was some talk of resistance to "Northern tyranny," but when Alvarado and his "army," including Graham's men and two pieces of field-artillery, appeared near Los Angeles the talk abruptly ceased.

For the next few months there were constant trivial disturbances and conspiracies in California, which were finally put an end to by Alvarado's cynically but shrewdly agreeing to accept the constitutional laws of December 29, 1836, which were the crowning triumph of Centralist principles.[2]

[1] Bancroft, *California*, III, 470; Richman, *California*, 239.

[2] Under date of July 9, 1837, Alvarado issued a proclamation to the people of California, declaring that as their arms had given them liberty and a "wise Congress" had assured them peace, they must now preserve inviolate their union with Mexico. "*Viva la Nación! Viva la Constitución del año de 36!*" —(Bancroft, *California*, III, 529.)

As a part of the agreement, Castillero, one of Alvarado's southern opponents, was sent to Mexico to present the case to the supreme government, which, in its weakness and inability to do anything else, made the best of a bad business and confirmed Alvarado and Vallejo provisionally in their places.[1]

The successful leaders of the revolution were not slow to partition the spoils. Vallejo got control of the missions of San Rafael and San Francisco de Solano; Alvarado, the mission of San Juan Bautista. The Americans and English who had served in the army were given lands and cattle, and as there were plenty of both to go round, the country was peaceful and happy.

It was at about this time that there appeared in California a man who was destined to play an important part in the history of the country. Johann August Suter, or Sutter, as the name was generally written, was a native of Baden. When he was sixteen years old he took up his residence in Switzerland, failed in business there, and in 1834 sailed for America as an emigrant, leaving his family behind him. From New York he went to St. Louis, and then in the spring of 1835 to New Mexico, where he was a trader for a year or two, apparently without much success. In the spring of 1838 he started for California with a party of seven men, travelling by the then well-known Oregon trail, and arriving at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River, in October. In order to get from Vancouver to California it was necessary for him to go first to Honolulu, thence to Sitka, and thence to San Francisco; so that it was not until July, 1839, that Sutter landed in California. At Monterey he passed himself off as an officer of the French army, though he probably had never seen France, and was cordially received by Alvarado, who advised Sutter to announce his intention of becoming a Mexican citizen, and in the meantime to go into the interior and select any tract of unoccupied land that might suit him, and return to Monterey in

[1] "*Lâchés finalement*" is the way in which Duflot de Mofras characterizes this act of Bustamante's government.—(*Exploration de l'Orégon*, I, 302.)

a year, when he would be given his papers of naturalization and a grant of land.[1]

As a result of the information Sutter had picked up in New Mexico, in Oregon, and in Alaska he had made up his mind to settle in the Sacramento valley, as far away as possible from Mexican authorities, where he might be free to pursue his own plans for collecting furs and trading with the natives and the trappers. Some time about the end of August, 1839, therefore, he settled himself at a point on the Sacramento River near its junction with the American River (*Rio de los Americanos*), the site of the present city of Sacramento.

Sutter's enterprise proved remarkably successful, and his frontier camp grew into what he called a fort, and became a sort of Alsatia, where all the wandering American and English vagabonds of California found a refuge in which they could not be disturbed by any Mexican authorities. By the end of 1842 there were probably from thirty to forty white men connected in one way or another with the establishment; and there were also a number of Indians employed by Sutter, some of whom he actually succeeded in making work. He raised a certain amount of wheat, distilled brandy from the wild grapes which grew in abundance in the neighborhood, and began to acquire large herds of cattle. Having been naturalized as a Mexican citizen, he applied for the grant of land promised to him, which was accordingly issued on June 18, 1841, and included eleven square leagues of land.[2]

An English visitor to California in 1842 describes Sutter as—

"trapping, farming, trading, bullying the government, and letting out Indians on hire. . . . If he really has the talent and the courage to make the most of his position, he is not unlikely to render California a second Texas. Even now, the Americans only want a rallying point for carrying into effect their theory, that the English race is destined by 'right divine' to expel the Spaniards from their ancient seats—a

[1] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 122–128.
[2] *Ibid.*, 126; *Ferris v. Coover*, 10 Cal., 589.

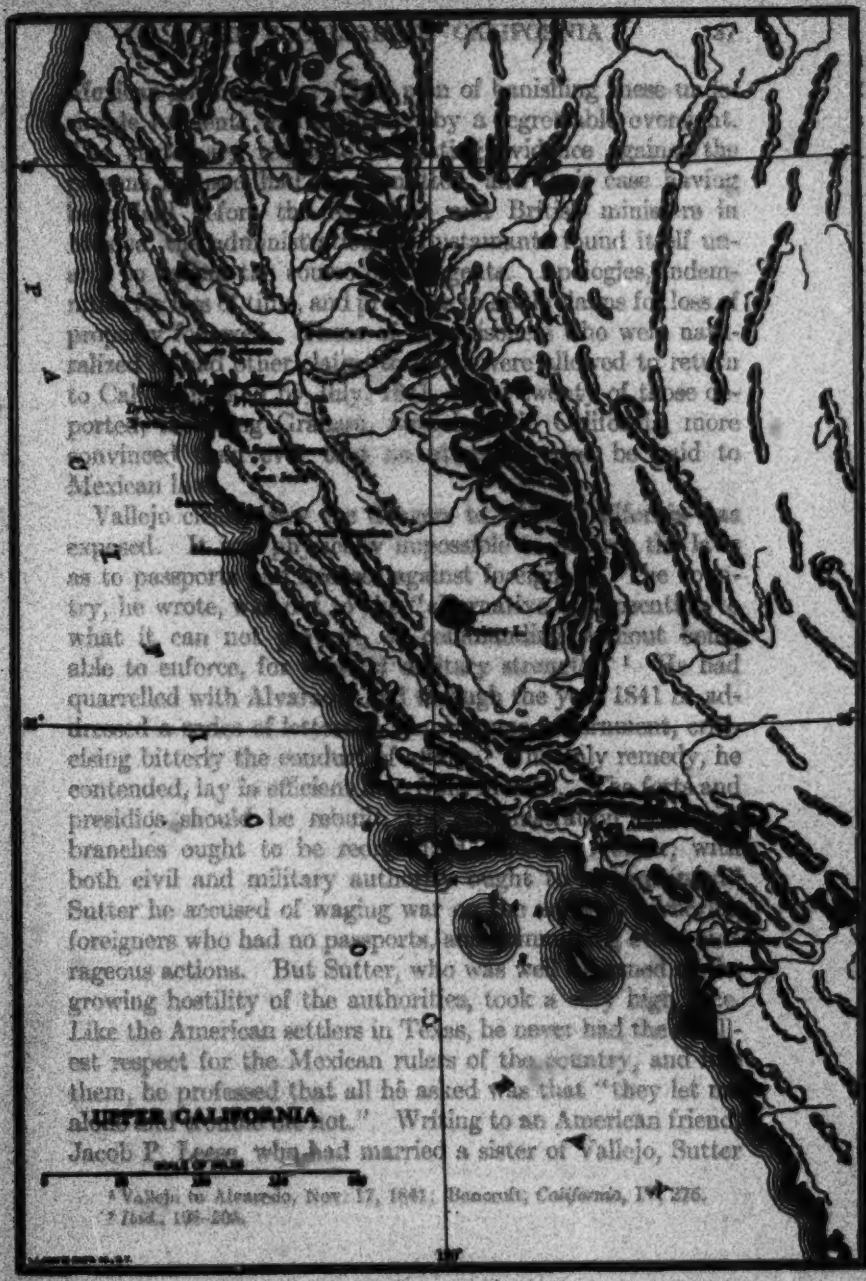
theory which has already begun to develop itself in more ways than one.

"American adventurers," continues our author, "have repeatedly stolen cattle and horses by wholesale, with as little compunction as if they had merely helped themselves to an instalment of their own property. American trappers have frequently stalked into the Californian towns with their long rifles, ready for all sorts of mischief, practically setting the government at defiance, and putting the inhabitants in bodily fear; and, in 1836, the American residents, as also some of the American skippers on the coast, supported the revolution, in the hope of its merely transferring California from Mexico to the United States.

"Now, for fostering and maturing Brother Jonathan's ambitious views, Captain Sutter's establishment is admirably situated. Besides lying on the direct route between San Francisco, on the one hand, and the Missouri and the Willamette, on the other, it virtually excludes the Californians from all the best parts of their own country, the valleys of the San Joachin, the Sacramento, and the Colorado. Hitherto, the Spaniards have confined themselves to the comparatively barren slip of land, varying from ten to forty miles in width, which lies between the ocean and the first range of mountains; and beyond this slip they will never penetrate with their present character and their present force, if Captain Sutter, or any other adventurer, can gather round him a score of such marksmen as won Texas on the field of San Jacinto. But this is not all; for the Americans, if masters of the interior, will soon discover that they have a natural right to a maritime outlet; so that, whatever may be the fate of Monterey and the more southerly ports, San Francisco will, to a moral certainty, sooner or later, fall into the possession of Americans—the only possible mode of preventing such a result being the previous occupation of the port on the part of Great Britain. English, in some sense or other of the word, the richest portions of California must become."[1]

The authorities of California were quite as much alive as Sir George Simpson to the risk that California might become English, "in some sense or other of the word," and months before his visit they had taken steps, weak and ill-considered indeed, to avert the danger. In 1840 they suddenly laid hands on Isaac Graham, and about a hundred other Americans and Englishmen who were found in the seaports, imprisoned them on charges of conspiracy, and sent off some fifty of the prisoners to San Blas, to be dealt with by the

[1] Simpson's *Narrative*, I, 226–227.




[1] Vallejo to Alvarado, Nov. 17, 1841; Bancroft, *California*, IV, 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, 198–205.

[1] Simpson's *Narrative*, I, 326-327.

Mexican government. Their plan of banishing these undesirable residents was hampered by a regrettable oversight. The customary requisite of getting evidence against the persons accused had been omitted, and their case having been laid before the American and British ministers in Mexico, the administration of Bustamante found itself unable to defend the course of its agents. Apologies, indemnities for loss of time, and promises to settle claims for loss of property followed. Those of the prisoners who were naturalised or had other claims to favor were allowed to return to California, and by July, 1841, about twenty of those deported, including Graham, were back in California, more convinced than ever that no attention need be paid to Mexican laws.

Vallejo clearly saw the dangers to which California was exposed. It was physically impossible to enforce the laws as to passports and licenses against foreigners. The country, he wrote, was put to the "alternative of consenting to what it can not prevent, or commanding without being able to enforce, for want of military strength."[1] He had quarrelled with Alvarado, and through the year 1841 he addressed a series of letters to the supreme government, criticising bitterly the conduct of affairs. The only remedy, he contended, lay in efficient help from Mexico. The forts and presidios should be rebuilt, the administration in all its branches ought to be reorganised, and a governor, with both civil and military authority ought to be appointed.[2] Sutter he accused of waging war on the natives, harboring foreigners who had no passports, and committing other outrageous actions. But Sutter, who was well informed of the growing hostility of the authorities, took a very high tone. Like the American settlers in Texas, he never had the smallest respect for the Mexican rulers of the country, and like them, he professed that all he asked was that "they let me alone and trouble me not." Writing to an American friend, Jacob P. Leese, who had married a sister of Vallejo, Sutter

[1] Vallejo to Alvarado, Nov. 17, 1841; Bancroft, *California*, IV, 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, 198-205.

boasted that if the authorities tried to drive him out of the country, he would "make a Declaration of Independence and proclaim California for a Republique independent from Mexico." He was strong enough, he said, to hold his fort until he could send couriers to the Willamette valley, where he could raise sixty or seventy good men (Americans), and he could, if he chose, send to the mountains and get hunters and Indians to join him. If the Mexicans did him any harm the French government would send a frigate to collect heavy damages. Vallejo, of course, sent this precious letter to Mexico.[1]

The unpopular and unstable government of Bustamante, at its last gasp in 1841, was unable to spare a man or a dollar; but when Santa Anna was once firmly seated, he arranged to send troops under the command of a military governor, who was to be instructed to see that the laws of the republic were strictly obeyed throughout the length and breadth of California. The ideas of the government were excellent, the execution of them deplorable. General Micheltorena, a braggart, who was believed to be "not overstocked with the one indispensable requisite to make a good soldier," was put in command of some three hundred convicts, ignorant of the very elements of drill and discipline. Of the early days of Micheltorena's rule in California, which was just at the time of Commodore Jones's seizure of Monterey, enough has already been said.[2] It remains only to relate the end of his career as governor.

For some two years Micheltorena continued in power without encountering any serious difficulty. There were from time to time rumors of local plots against him, and orders came from Mexico to have everything in readiness to repel an invasion in case of war with the United States. But no trouble arose with the foreigners, chiefly because nobody thought it necessary to ask them inconvenient questions as to passports.[3] There always remained, however,

[1] *Ibid.*, 238–240; Richman, 270–273. [2] See Chapter XX, Vol. I.

[3] On July 14, 1843, a decree was issued through the Mexican War Department to the Comandante General in California, directing the expulsion of

the chronic difficulty about money. The convict soldiers were not paid, and they robbed hen-roosts or whatever else they could lay hands on. The condition of California by the end of 1844 was perhaps no worse than it had been three years before; but it certainly was no better. Meanwhile American immigrants, contemptuous of the "Spaniards" and their laws, were coming into the country in steadily increasing numbers.

Castañares, the Californian delegate to the Mexican Congress, by writing and by word of mouth, urged on the government the neglected and dangerous condition of the territory. His plans were magnificent. Plenty of soldiers, rebuilt fortifications, a navy yard, a fleet of gun-boats, improved mail service, revived missions, and, of course, assisted immigration on a large scale were among the remedies he proposed. Where the money, skill, and energy were to come from for these objects he did not undertake to say. Certainly the Mexican government had none of either to spare, and they could only reply that they would attend to California when the affairs of Texas were disposed of.

In vain Castañares warned them that California could not wait, that it was worth far more than Texas, that it was on the verge of revolution, and that if left abandoned and uncared for it would certainly be lost. The now falling government of Santa Anna had staked its all in trying to raise an army nominally intended for Texas, and was utterly unable to do anything for California. Castañares protested in the solemn tones of a Hebrew prophet. "I tremble," he wrote, "at the sad consequences of such a loss. A powerful foreign government will there pitch its camps. . . . Then will sprout the seed which to-day lies forgotten in her soil;

natives of the United States. After long delays and vigorous protests by Waddy Thompson this was explained as a general order in relation to all foreigners "who from their bad conduct might be considered prejudicial to public order." It was never published or acted on in California. See Sen. Doc. 300, 29 Cong., 1 sess.; Bancroft, *California*, IV, 260. A copy of the order was sent to Almonte, the Mexican minister in Washington, with an explanation that it had been dictated with the noble object of forestalling anything that might disturb public tranquillity.—(Bocanegra to Almonte, July 6, 1845; *Sec. de Rel. Est. MSS.*)

then will her mines be worked, her ports crowded, her fields cultivated, and then will a numerous and toiling people acquire property which they will be ready to defend with their blood." [1]

The revolt which Castañares had predicted soon broke out. It was not intended as a separatist movement in any sense. The leaders wished to remain Mexicans, but they wished the offices for themselves and their friends, the *hijos del pote*, and they availed themselves of the strong popular dislike for the convict soldiers.[2] In the middle of November, 1844, some fifty Californians pronounced, and the usual Mexican methods to put down the rebellion were at once adopted, the governor proclaiming that all foreigners who took part would be put to death without quarter, and that all others would be tried and executed or imprisoned. But when it came to fighting, neither party proved eager for war; and a so-called treaty was made, by which Micheltorena agreed to send away his convict troops, and the Californian rebels agreed to wait at San José for the fulfilment of the promise.

But Micheltorena had not the slightest intention of fulfilling it. Instead, he enlisted the mercenary aid of Sutter and Graham and their fighting men, and perhaps got some help from Thomas Larkin, who had recently been appointed American consul at Monterey. Everything being ready, Sutter, with about a hundred Americans and English, and some Indians, started on the first of January, 1845, to attack the rebels who, under Alvarado and José Castro, were still in camp at San José. At the same time Micheltorena issued another proclamation, and with three hundred Mexicans he marched out from Monterey to join Sutter. In the face of so large a body, Alvarado could only retreat toward the south, where he was followed, very slowly, by Micheltorena and his allies.[3]

The retreating "army" of Alvarado, numbering about

[1] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 413–418.

[2] In Mexico—as in Washington and in London—the movement was looked upon, however, as in reality a declaration of independence.

[3] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 458–491.

ninety men, reached Los Angeles on January 21, 1845, and after some parleying, won over the authorities of the town. A military force, which included a company of foreigners, was raised at Los Angeles within a week, and when Micheltorena arrived at Santa Barbara at the beginning of February, delegates from the rebels were there to endeavor to bring him to terms. The negotiations, however, failed, and on the fifteenth of February Micheltorena and his men began moving cautiously toward Los Angeles. The rival armies, numbering four hundred men apiece, or less, finally met on February 20, at Cahuenga, not far from Los Angeles, and engaged in a noisy but distant (and therefore quite ineffectual) exchange of shots. The foreigners on both sides, it should be explained, took no part in this contest, having made some agreement to that effect among themselves, and it seems that as one of the terms of the bargain, Sutter allowed himself to be taken prisoner by the revolutionists.[1]

The Mexicans, being thus left to fight their quarrel out among themselves, soon came to the conclusion that they preferred peace. Micheltorena, on the morning of February 21, 1845, hoisted a white flag and proposed a capitulation, and on the next day another treaty was signed, under which he and his convicts went back to Mexico and Pio Pico, of Los Angeles, was made governor *ad interim*. As a further concession to the people of the south, Los Angeles was to be the capital; but José Castro was made military commander of the territory, while Alvarado was consoled with the custom-house at Monterey. The rest of the offices were divided between north and south for "political" reasons.

How far, if at all, this successful rising was connected with the general hostility to Santa Anna's government is not by any means clear. But it occurred at about the same time with the events in Mexico which ended in Santa Anna's arrest and banishment, and when the news of Micheltorena's overthrow reached the capital Herrera's administration was

[1] The terms of the agreement by which the foreigners abstained from fighting are, to a large extent, matters of conjecture; but that some agreement of the sort was made seems certain.—(*Ibid.*, 502-508.)

in full control, and quite prepared to express approval of the movement which had resulted in driving out Santa Anna's man. In instructions dated April 11, 1845, no word of blame was uttered, and the local legislature was requested to propose the man they wanted for governor.[1] The Federal government also made the customary announcement that it was "busy with measures which will assure the integrity of our territory in that precious part of our republic." At the same time measures were taken to restore Mexican authority in California by means of what the Minister of War saw fit to describe as "a most brilliant expedition." There was a good deal of mystery about it, but the fact was that some six hundred men, with large quantities of supplies, were actually collected a few months later under the command of Colonel Ignacio Iniestra, and got as far on their road as Cuernavaca. Four vessels were also chartered at Acapulco, but before the expedition could be got ready to sail a revolution broke out, and men, arms, stores, and ships were turned over to the revolutionists, who kept them all at home.[2]

Meanwhile Governor Pico, in obedience to exhortations from the central government, was warning the people that war with the United States was imminent, and appealing to them to fly to arms for the defence of their beloved country against the attacks of a foreign usurper. His proclamations left the people unmoved, and little or nothing was accomplished in the way of preparing for a hearty and effectual co-operation between the residents of the various parts of the country.

The truth was that the Californian natives were not capable of any sustained and energetic measures. Their Mexican ancestors had never exhibited much efficiency, and in the course of three generations in a country so productive as California, in a climate so mild, and with an abundance of cheap labor—such as it was—furnished by the mission Indians, the race had become degenerate. They possessed but one art, that of horse-breaking, for all accounts

[1] *Ibid.*, 826. [2] *Ibid.*, 824–829.

describe them as excellent horsemen. They were without the energy to make new settlements, or to put up new buildings, or even to keep the old ones in repair. After the destruction of the missions they allowed every branch of agriculture to decay. They had lost even the rude manufactures introduced in mission days. Their trade was in the hands of foreigners. They were too incapable when they slaughtered cattle to skin them properly, and too indolent to go to the trouble of curing the hides for export, a laborious task that had to be performed chiefly by American sailors.[1] With uncounted cattle at their doors, the Californians had neither milk nor butter nor cheese. The country abounded with fur-bearing animals, which they did not capture, but which were hunted by American, British, and Russian trappers. Their waters abounded in fish, but they were too lazy to build boats or to make nets. They never surveyed their coasts, and they never explored their country; and again these tasks were undertaken by American, British, and French explorers from the other side of the world.

Their country was a fertile garden, splendidly adapted, as all men could see, for agriculture and for pasturage. Whether they possessed mineral resources no one knew, but every one could see that they possessed magnificent forests and unequalled harbors, and that they were incapable of utilizing any of these advantages. As they were incapable of governing the country, so they were obviously impotent to retain possession as against any one who could land a few hundred armed men. To use the phrase which John Quincy Adams had used of Florida, the country was a derelict, to be picked up by any adventurer who chose to take it into the port of a strong and stable government, and to develop its possibilities by efficient colonists.[2]

Efficient colonists, it was known, were ready and willing to come from the United States, and come they did in the

[1] Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, 173–175.

[2] "*Los ricos terrenos de California*," Paredes wrote in his proclamation of January, 1846, "*sin paz, sin administracion, sin rentas publicas*," condensing in a few words the helpless and abandoned condition of the country.—(Bustamante, *Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, I, 116.)

same spirit that Europeans were going into South Africa, heedless of all the rights and feelings of the natives. None the less, the natives received them with easy good-humor and friendliness.

"Notwithstanding the bitter feeling entertained in Mexico against Americans," says Bancroft, "the imminence of national hostilities, and the warlike nature of the orders sent to the north, immigrants to California from the United States were still received with the greatest hospitality and kindness, though in most cases they entered the country illegally, and in many were not backward in declaring their disregard or contempt for all Mexican formalities of law. The supreme government had perhaps some ground for blaming the Californian authorities for the manner in which they enforced the laws, or failed to enforce them; but the immigrants had no cause of complaint whatever. There was not in 1845 the slightest sign of disposition to oppress foreigners in any way. There were rumors, fomented by men who desired an outbreak, and circulated among new-comers on every route, of an intention to drive out all Americans; but these rumors were unfounded, and were credited only by the ignorant, who did not come personally in contact with the natives, and who never could understand that the Spaniards, as they were called, had any rights in their own country. 'The Spaniards were becoming troublesome!' is a common remark of old pioneers, who justify their action of the next year by dwelling on the growing jealousy and hatred of the people toward Americans; but all evidence to be drawn from correspondence of the time shows that not only were the people still friendly, but that the authorities, far from being hostile, were even more careless than in former years about enforcing legal formalities in connection with passports, naturalisation, and land grants."[1]

With this migratory movement the government of the United States had of course nothing whatever to do. But if it did not help the movement on, neither did it do anything to hinder it, although the extent to which the migration was growing was well known in Washington, and the Mexican legation issued public warnings as to the requirements of the Mexican laws. Was this the result of any settled plan? And what had been the policy of the successive American administrations prior to that of Polk?

There certainly was no idea in the earlier days of acquir-

[1] Bancroft, *California*, IV, 604.

ing this portion of the kingdom of New Spain, although the coast of California had been visited for years by American vessels and the opportunities for foreign colonisation and the ease with which the territory could be seized by any foreign power had been a frequent subject of remark. Even as early as 1799 a Spanish governor of Lower California complained to his superiors of the "arrogant boldness" of American whalers in the Pacific, and pointed out that "possibly this proud nation, constantly increasing its strength, may one day venture to measure it with Spain, and acquiring such knowledge of our seas and coasts may make California the object of its attack." [1]

The first official suggestion that the boundary between the United States and Mexico might be so adjusted as to include the bay of San Francisco seems to have been contained in the instructions of August 6, 1835, from the State Department to Anthony Butler.[2] That suggestion came to nothing, and after the successful revolt of Texas the subject of a revision of the boundary was not again mentioned by the State Department for several years. In 1842 it was, however, brought forward anew by Waddy Thompson, the minister in Mexico, who wrote suggesting to Webster that Mexico might be willing to cede California by treaty in settlement of the claims of citizens of the United States.

"I believe," he wrote, "that this government would cede to us Texas and the Californias and I am thoroughly satisfied that is all we shall ever get for the claims of our merchants on this country. As to Texas I regard it as of very little value compared with California, the richest, the most beautiful and the healthiest country in the world. Our Atlantic border secures us a commercial ascendency there; with the acquisition of Upper California we should have the same ascendency on the Pacific. . . . It is a country in which slavery is not neces-

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 82.

[2] See Vol. I, p. 259, of this work. Adams says that Jackson's "passion" for the thirty-seventh degree of latitude, from the Arkansas River to the Pacific, so as to include San Francisco and Monterey, was kindled by a letter from a purser in the navy to the Secretary of State, Forsyth, dated Alexandria, Aug. 1, 1835.—(*Memoirs*, XI, 348.) There was, however, abundant information besides this then readily accessible.

sary, and, therefore, if that is made an objection let there be another compromise. France and England both have had their eyes upon it."[1]

And to President Tyler Thompson wrote at the same time, asking him to read the despatch to Webster on the subject of Upper California, which, he said, "will reconcile the Northern people as they have large fishing and commercial interests in the Pacific and have literally no port there."[2] The suggestion for the acquisition of California appealed very favorably to the President, and also to Webster, who at the time of receiving Thompson's letter was in the thick of his negotiations with Lord Ashburton. Instructions were therefore sent to Thompson favoring the idea of a treaty with Mexico, in which the cession of California should be made a mode of discharging Mexican debts. At the same time Everett, in London, was instructed to suggest to the British government a settlement of the Oregon question and the matters in dispute between Mexico and the United States "by a tripartite arrangement which should, as one provision, embrace a cession to the United States of the port of San Francisco on the coast of California"; to which Aberdeen replied that though the British government "would not deem it expedient to become a party to any such arrangement, they have not the slightest objection to the United States making an acquisition of territory in that direction."[3] Webster, in conversation with Adams, said that he had also talked over the question with Lord Ashburton, and "that the question had been put to him whether if a cession from Mexico, South of our present boundary line, forty-two, to include the port of San Francisco, could be obtained, England would make any objection to it, and Lord Ashburton thought she would not."[4] Webster even

[1] Thompson to Webster, April 29, 1842; *State Dept. MSS.*
[2] Thompson to Tyler, May 9, 1842; *ibid.*
[3] Everett to Calhoun, March 28, 1845; *ibid.*
[4] J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, XI, 347. See also Schaefer's "British Attitude toward the Oregon Question," *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XVI, 293, who gives Ashburton's own version of the conversation. This author thinks that Webster's real plan was for a tripartite arrangement, the United States to pay a sum for California to be agreed on, of which part should be turned over to American and part to British creditors.

went so far as to sound the Mexican minister in Washington, and to renew the proposal for the cession in the spring of 1843.[1] But Commodore Jones's seizure of Monterey, which had become known in Mexico about the end of 1842, had, of course, put a stop for the time being to any serious attempt at a negotiation for California.

For the next year the subject seems to have remained completely in abeyance. It was only revived after the treaty for the annexation of Texas had been signed, in April, 1844, when the subject of the acquisition of California again became the subject of consideration by President Tyler and his advisers. That treaty had been expressly so framed as to leave the boundaries of Texas undefined, and the joint resolution of the following winter was drawn in the same manner. It was hoped that this might open the way to a negotiation, in the course of which the whole subject of the boundaries of Mexico, from the Gulf to the Pacific, might be reconsidered, but these hopes came to nothing.

The possibility of a transfer of California from Mexico to Great Britain was also the subject of a good deal of discussion at various times. The arrangements made with the British holders of Mexican bonds before 1840 had contemplated, as already has been seen, a mode of payment by issuing scrip certificates authorizing the persons holding such scrip, at their option, to locate lands in Texas or elsewhere in Mexican territory. This, of course, did not contemplate anything like the creation of a British protectorate, as the location of land by holders of scrip would simply be an individual acquisition of property. But although this would have been the legal effect, and although few bondholders, if any, ever exercised their options to locate lands within Mexican territory, there were persistent rumors of huge grants to British subjects.

In the course of the year 1841 Pakenham, then British

[1] The suggestion was made on the day the ratifications of the convention for payment of adjudicated claims were exchanged, viz.: March 29, 1843. And see Adams's *Memoirs*, XI, 3. At about the same time Webster wrote to Everett, and spoke to Fox, the British minister in Washington, of his tripartite plan.—(*Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XVI, 293, note 61.)

minister in Mexico, learned a good deal from various sources of the value of Upper California. His principal informant was James Alexander Forbes, whose work on California was published in London in 1839, and who had devoted a chapter "to Upper California considered as a field for foreign colonization." He was a partner of the firm of Barron, Forbes & Company, of Tepic (near San Blas, on the west coast of Mexico), and while on a visit to the capital had had a conversation with Pakenham, to whom Barron, then British consul at Tepic, had frequently written in regard to California. At about the same time Pakenham learned of the journey to the Pacific of Duflot de Mofras, an attaché of the French legation at Mexico, who during the years 1841, 1842, and 1843 travelled extensively in California, and at least as far north as the mouth of the Columbia River. His movements seemed to Pakenham to be highly suspicious, for the British government in 1841, and for two or three years later, was very uneasy in regard to French activities in the Pacific, and was sending repeated instructions to its naval and diplomatic officers, directing them to watch the movements of the French.[1]

As the net result of Pakenham's information from various sources, he wrote to the Foreign Office, expressing his regret "that advantage should not be taken of the arrangement sometime since concluded by the Mexican Government with their creditors in Europe, to establish an English population in the magnificent Territory of Upper California." As Texas had five years before thrown off Mexican authority, that arrangement, so far as related to Texas lands, must, he thought, "be considered a dead letter." Chihuahua and New Mexico he did not regard as eligible districts for colonization.

"But I believe," he continued, "there is no part of the World offering greater natural advantages for the establishment of an English

[1] De Mofras wrote an interesting account of his travels, which was published by the French government in 1844, in two stout volumes and an atlas, under the title *Exploration du Territoire de l'Orégon*, etc. The Hudson's Bay Company people looked on De Mofras with great suspicion and dislike.—(Sir G. Simpson to the Governor, etc., of the Hudson's Bay Company, Nov. 25, 1841; *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XIV, 81.)

colony than the Province of Upper California; while its commanding position on the Pacific, its fine harbours, its forests of excellent timber for ship-building as well as for every other purpose, appear to me to render it by all means desirable, in a political point of view, that California, once ceasing to belong to Mexico, should not fall into the hands of any Power but England; and the present debilitated condition of Mexico, and the gradual increase of foreign population in California render it probable that its separation from Mexico will be effected at no distant period; in fact, there is some reason to believe that daring and adventurous speculators in the United States have already turned their thoughts in that direction. . . . I need scarcely observe that any foreign Settlement in California would for some time to come be nominally dependent on the Mexican Republic; but this state of things would not last forever, nor, while it did last, would it, I imagine, be attended with serious inconvenience." [1]

In writing thus to Lord Palmerston, Pakenham very evidently had in his mind the history and development of the American colonies in Texas, and looked forward to a similar development and separation in case a British colony should be established on the shores of the Pacific.

The British policy at this time, however, under the government of Sir Robert Peel, who came into office before Pakenham's letter reached London, was by no means favorable to the acquisition of any additional British possessions. Since the Canadian revolt of two or three years before British statesmen were much inclined to a "little England" policy, and therefore when Pakenham's despatch came to be considered, it met with a cool reception from Lord Stanley, the new Colonial Secretary. He was not anxious, as his Under-Secretary informed the Foreign Office—

"for the formation of new and distant Colonies, all of which involve heavy direct and still heavier indirect expenditure, besides multiplying the liabilities of misunderstanding and collisions with Foreign Powers. Still less is Lord Stanley prepared to recommend the adoption of a plan whereby the Soil shall, in the first instance, be vested in a Company of Adventurers, with more or less of the powers of Sovereignty and of Legislation, and the Settlement so formed be afterwards placed under the protection of the British Crown; which as it seems to his Lordship, is the position contended for by Mr. Pakenham." [2]

[1] Pakenham to Palmerston, Aug. 30, 1841; E. D. Adams, 233.
[2] Hope to Canning, Nov. 23, 1841; *ibid.*, 240.

This reply was transmitted by the Foreign Office to Pakenham without comment; and from the end of the year 1841, and until nearly five years later, neither Pakenham nor his successor, Bankhead, seems to have made any suggestions to his government as to acquiring an interest in California.

Other British agents, however, were more active in the matter. In September, 1844, Forbes, who was now British consul at Monterey, in California, wrote to Barron, the consul at Tepic, in regard to an interview he had had with what he described as a body of influential native Californians, who had inquired whether California could "be received under the protection of Great Britain, in a similar manner to that of the Ionian Isles." Forbes said he had refused to meddle in the matter, but felt himself in duty bound to use all his influence "to prevent this fine country from falling into the hands of any other foreign power than that of England." He thought it impossible for Mexico to hold California much longer, and if the government of Great Britain could properly extend its protection to California he considered it would be impolitic to allow any other nation to avail itself of the "critical situation" then existing. Mofras, he said, had made an offer of French protection; but the increase in the numbers of American settlers in California, which Forbes did not refer to, was probably what was then regarded as the most pressing danger. Barron, in forwarding this letter to the Foreign Office, said he would express no opinion on the subject of the despatch "otherwise than to say that this fine country has been totally neglected by Mexico, and she must ere long see some other nation its protector, or in absolute possession of it."[1]

These despatches were received in London on December 13, 1844, and on the thirty-first of the month (the first mail to Mexico following the receipt of Barron's letter),

[1] Barron to Aberdeen, Oct. 12, 1844; *ibid.*, 242. Forbes in his book had strongly expressed the opinion that California was "apt to separate from the parent state," and that any foreign power, if disposed to take possession of California, could easily do so. This was written in 1835, although not published until 1839.—(Forbes's *California*, 146–149.)

Aberdeen wrote to the various British agents in regard to the policy of the government. To Elliot, in Texas, and to Bankhead, in Mexico, he wrote that the plan for a joint guarantee of Texan independence was at an end, thanks to the course of conduct pursued by the Mexican government, which "must effectually paralyze the exertions by which Gt. Britain and France were prepared to uphold the Independence of Texas against the encroachments of the U. States, even at the risk of a collision with that power." To Barron he wrote, that it was "entirely out of the question that Her Majesty's Government should give any countenance to the notion which seems to have been agitated of Great Britain being invited to take California under her protection," although it was important to Great Britain that if California should throw off the Mexican yoke it "should not assume any other which might prove inimical to British interests"; and that Great Britain would "view with much dissatisfaction the establishment of a protectoral power over California by any other foreign state." [1]

These letters revealed a change in the attitude of the British government since Webster had been informed that no objection would be made to the acquisition of California by the United States. The change may readily be explained by the fact that the negotiations in respect to Oregon had assumed quite a different aspect, and by the fact that the value of such a port as San Francisco was becoming better understood.

"Look at the chart," wrote Lord Haddington, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to Lord Aberdeen. "You will see that it is not only the finest harbour, but the most easily defended, really unattackable from the land side, and therefore as good as an island, while towards the sea it has facilities of defence which are hardly to be found any-

[1] Aberdeen to Elliot; same to Bankhead; same to Barron, Dec. 31, 1844; E. D. Adams, 192, 248. Forbes told Larkin, the American consul, about a year later, that the British government had reprimanded him for having introduced the subject of California politics, and that he believed the rumors of negotiation with England were false, although England would not regard with satisfaction the interference of any other nation. His own preference, he added, was for the United States to take California and improve the value of property.—(Bancroft, *California*, V, 70.)

where, unless at Malta and Corfu. When we are about it, let us obtain possession, while we can, of the Key of the North-West coast of America." [1]

But though British admirals, British consuls, and Hudson's Bay employees urged their government to take over California, the dread of a war with the United States, coupled with uncertainty as to the action of France, and possibly some chivalrous unwillingness to take advantage of the pitiable weakness of Mexico, were enough to induce Peel's cabinet to remain passive. They watched events and made no sign.

[1] Gordon's *Aberdeen*, 183. The author attributes this letter to Lord Ellenborough, "then at the Admiralty"—an obvious blunder: Lord Ellenborough was not "at the Admiralty" when the letter was written, but was governor-general of India.

## CHAPTER XXX

### SLIDELL'S MISSION

The anomalous conditions in California and the dangers arising out of the annexation of Texas to the United States gave less concern to General Herrera's unhappy administration than the state of affairs at home. He and his ministers had many and difficult problems to meet, but the most difficult was that of bare existence; for the situation had been immensely complicated by their decision to treat with Texas upon the basis of its recognized independence, a decision which had been approved by a reluctant Congress in the face of the furious opposition of a large portion of the press.

The aspect of domestic affairs was indeed calculated to dismay the stoutest heart. The government of Herrera had no following throughout the country. He was himself more or less the accident of an hour, and was quite devoid of the personal strength and qualities of leadership which had enabled Santa Anna to retain for so long a time his hold on the governing classes in Mexico. Every important man in the country was almost openly plotting to obtain power, but as yet there seemed to be no man with sufficient courage and prestige to establish a government. The condition of the Treasury went continually from bad to worse. The ordinary receipts were far from sufficient to meet the ordinary expenditures in times of peace, even though not a dollar of interest was paid on the foreign debt and the payment of the instalments due by treaty to the United States had been suspended.[1] The army had become more and more

[1] *Memoria que sobre el estado de la hacienda . . . presentó á las cámaras el ministro del ramo en julio de 1845.* The Minister of the Treasury at this time was Luis de la Rosa.

unmanageable every day, partly because the money to pay, feed, clothe, and arm it could not be had, and partly because the revolutions of the past four years, which had begun by making Santa Anna a dictator and had ended by overthrowing him, had emphasized the ability of the army to make and unmake the government of Mexico. Both of those revolutions had been commenced by the active and ambitious Paredes, who had failed to receive any reward which he considered adequate for his deserts, and who was now constantly engaged in schemes for putting himself in Herrera's place.

The regulation of the army and the establishment of the public credit on a sound basis, which would necessarily have involved a revision of the tariff and a radical reduction of expenses, were imperative; but they were tasks which a merely provisional administration such as that of Herrera could hardly be expected to carry through. Congress during its regular session had, however, taken some steps to improve the financial situation. By a law of March 1, 1845, a part of the customs receipts was set aside toward paying debts accrued prior to December 2, 1844;[1] the property belonging to the church, or which was intended for the support of charitable and educational institutions, was to be restored;[2] and the government was authorized to settle definitively the foreign debt. But as it was forbidden to fund overdue interest, or to dispose of any property of the republic in payment of the public debt, the measure hardly seemed likely to prove fruitful.[3]

Measures were also taken to increase the military force by raising volunteers. "The Mexican nation," ran the statute, "summons all her sons to the defence of national independence, threatened by the usurpation of the territory of Texas which it is attempted to accomplish by a decree of annexation, passed by the Congress and approved by the President of the United States of the North. The government shall, therefore, put the whole force of the army in the

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 7.
[2] Law of April 28, 1845; *ibid.*, 16.
[3] Law of March 5, 1845; *ibid.*, 8.

field, pursuant to the authority conferred by existing laws, both for the preservation of public order, and the support of our institutions, and in case of necessity to act as a reserve; and under the authority of the law of December 9, 1844, it may raise bodies to be known as *Defenders of Independence and the Laws*."[1]

As Congress had provided no money for supporting the sons of Mexico in the field, this law (passed at the close of the regular session, on May 31, and approved by the President four days later) could serve no other purpose than to arouse the patriotism of the nation. It was so regarded by the government, which issued regulations for enlisting volunteers, who were to receive no pay, and must not be government employees, or day-laborers, or in the enjoyment of ecclesiastical privileges. The volunteers were to pay for their own uniforms, and were to be armed by the departments, who might, however, if they had no weapons or ammunition for the purpose, apply to the federal government for assistance in this regard.[2]

It was only too apparent that these measures were far from sufficient to remedy the evils of the body politic; but President Herrera might have hesitated about calling a special session of Congress if he had not learned, by the middle of June, of President Jones's proclamation, summoning a convention of the people of Texas for the fourth of July. It had been known in Mexico for some days before that the Texan Congress was to meet in special session on the sixteenth of June, and it was now feared that the action of both the Congress and the convention of Texas might be in favor of annexation to the United States, rather than of negotiation with Mexico.[3]

The proclamation issued by the Mexican President, therefore, summoned Congress to meet on the first day of July, and specified as the subjects to be considered—

1. Constitutional reforms.

[1] Law of June 4, 1845; *ibid.*, 19. [2] Regulations of June 7, 1845; *ibid.*, 21.
[3] W. S. Parrott to Buchanan, May 22, 1845; same to same, June 17, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.*

2. Revision of the acts of the provisional government.

3. Matters pending for the final action of Congress, and especially those relative to the United States and the department of Texas.[1]

Congress met accordingly; and on July 16 Cuevas, the Minister of Foreign Relations, reported to the chambers the failure of Elliot's plan for a settlement by negotiation of the Texas question. He also laid before Congress the information received through Arrangoiz, the active and intelligent Mexican consul at New Orleans, that the Texan Congress had approved the proposal of annexation to the United States, that the Texan convention which was to meet on the fourth of July would unquestionably ratify the action of Congress, and that the American troops which had been stationed at Fort Jesup would embark at New Orleans for Galveston, and would advance as far as the Rio Grande.[2]

The information of the consul as to the future movement of the troops was correct in the main; for the occupation of Texas by the United States forces had been carefully arranged beforehand, so that there might be no delay the moment the Texan convention should adopt an ordinance in favor of accepting the proposals for annexation. President Tyler had given orders, more than a year before, for the concentration of troops on the Texan frontier. In the official returns of November, 1844, Brevet Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, whose head-quarters were at Fort Jesup, near Natchitoches, in Louisiana, had as many as twelve hundred men under his immediate command. On the Arkansas River, under General Arbuckle, seven hundred and seventy-four more were encamped. There they remained during the whole winter; but in the spring of 1845 Donelson, the American chargé in Texas, was, in effect, authorised to arrange for their future movements.

Donelson had been instructed by the State Department that the American army could not be employed to resist a

[1] Proclamation of June 16, 1845; Dublan y Lozano, V. 22.

[2] *Memoir & trans de los Negos*, IV. 543.

Mexican invasion until after Texas had accepted the terms of the joint resolution proposing annexation; but he continued earnestly to urge the importance of sending troops. Would the United States, he asked, stand still and see the country invaded by Mexico before the convention could ratify the American proposals? He believed that the Mexicans, at the instigation of Captain Elliot, were taking steps to drive the Texans from the Rio Grande;[1] although, as a matter of fact, Elliot, who had not yet quite despaired of defeating the plan of annexation, was doing his best to keep Mexico quiet, for the breaking out of hostilities would have ruined every chance of an agreement between Texas and Mexico.[2]

In answer to Donelson's urgent requests Buchanan wrote, that if there were a unanimous or nearly unanimous vote of the Texan *Congress* in favor of annexation, it would be regarded as conclusive evidence that the people of Texas were anxious for the "reunion" of the two republics, and that the President of the United States would then feel himself bound to repel a Mexican invasion. There were, however, he added, many reasons why it was preferable for Texas herself, until after the *convention* had acted, to drive the intruders from her territory.[3]

On the same day that Buchanan wrote thus to Donelson, orders were sent from the War Department to Taylor, at Fort Jesup, directing him to march the troops under his command to the Sabine River in preparation for an advance to the Rio Grande, "the Western frontier of Texas"; but he was not to cross the Texan border of the United States until he received information that the Texan convention had accepted the proposal for annexation.[4] Captain Stockton (who still commanded the unlucky *Princeton*) was or-

[1] Buchanan to Donelson, May 22, 1845; Donelson to Buchanan, June 4, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 40, 66.

[2] Elliott to Jones, June 13, 1845; Jones, 471. "I have written to Mexico in the strongest terms, suggesting complete abstinence from onward movement, let this Congress and Convention say what they may. The Mexicans had better leave the initiative in hostile proceedings to the United States."

[3] Buchanan to Donelson, June 15, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 42.

[4] Bancroft to Taylor, June 15, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81.

dered to repair with that ship and a small squadron under his command to the mouth of the Sabine, for the purpose of transporting the American troops to whatever positions Donelson and the Texan authorities should deem most expedient.[1]

It was, however, evidently impracticable for Taylor to embark his forces at the mouth of the Sabine on Stockton's ships, and he therefore made his arrangements, late in June, to move his infantry regiments by way of the Red River to New Orleans, and to embark there, together with his artillery, for such point on the coast of Texas as Donelson might indicate. The cavalry he proposed to send overland.[2]

Donelson, in consultation with the Texan authorities, had no difficulty in reaching the conclusion that the most suitable point for Taylor's infantry to occupy would be Corpus Christi, "the most Western point now occupied by Texas." The cavalry, he thought, should proceed to San Antonio and occupy that point, and possibly it would be advantageous to establish a third post between Corpus Christi and San Antonio.[3]

By the end of July, 1845, Taylor's infantry and artillery were therefore encamped at Corpus Christi, on a bluff overlooking the bay of the same name, into which enters the Nueces River; and from that time forward the United States occupied in force this post lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The cavalry soon afterward completed its long march, and joined the rest of the army, and before the

[1] Stockton had been for some time cruising with three or four ships off the coast of Texas. He was not at all satisfied to remain a peaceful spectator of events. When off Galveston in the month of May, 1845, he seems to have tried to persuade the Texans to collect a force and seize Matamoros; and he offered if that were done to support the movement with his ships. Jones says that what Stockton wanted was "to manufacture a war," and that these were his secret instructions from the United States government.—(Jones, 48–52.) The notion that the American government was then trying to "manufacture a war" is absurd. What they wanted was to buy off Mexico. Donelson, in the month of June, thought it necessary to warn Stockton against any premature action by his squadron.—(Donelson to Stockton, June 22, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 36.)

[2] Taylor to the Adjutant-General, June 13 and 30, and July 3, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 800–808.

[3] Donelson to Taylor, June 26, 1845; ibid., 801.

summer was over, additional troops having been sent to reinforce Taylor, more than half the regular army of the United States was in Texas. This force consisted of one regiment of dragoons, sixteen companies of artillery, and five regiments of infantry; numbering in all, according to the annual return in November, three thousand five hundred and ninety-three men.[1]

The information that the American troops were on the point of embarking in July, 1845, for the purpose of actually occupying Texas, seems to have come as a sort of surprise to the Mexican ministers. However, it was quite evident—in view of their repeated declarations that the mere act of annexation would *ipso facto* amount to a declaration of war—that they could do no less on the present occasion than propose vigorous action to Congress. The Minister of Foreign Relations, therefore, on July 21, 1845, proposed the following resolution:

"As soon as the government ascertains that the department of Texas has united itself to the American Union, or that the troops of the latter have invaded it, it shall declare that the nation is at war with the United States of North America. This war shall be conducted for the purpose of saving the integrity of the Mexican territory within its ancient limits—recognised by the United States in the treaties from the year 1828 to 1836—and for the purpose of assuring the threatened independence of the nation."[2]

On the same day the Secretary of the Treasury proposed the adoption of a law authorizing the government to make a loan, either domestic or foreign, for such an amount as should furnish the Treasury the actual sum of fifteen million dollars. To secure the payment of this loan and the interest thereon, the government was to hypothecate all the income of the nation not hypothecated for any other debt.

The authority to make the loan was granted by a law passed September 15, 1845,[3] but the proposed resolution

[1] *Return of the Army of Occupation in Texas*; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 220 *f.*

[2] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 843. [3] Dublán y Lozano, V, 38.

authorizing a declaration of war was not passed, either because it was considered that war had already been declared, or because Herrera's government still entertained hopes of adjusting the difficulty by negotiation, a result which Cuevas at least was sincerely anxious to accomplish.

In spite of the warlike talk of the ministry, the conduct of the government, so far as it was then known, was met by bitter opposition. It was accused of having put the Texan question into the worst possible predicament; it had allowed itself, it was said, to be deceived by the Texan rebels; and it had consented to discuss proposals of settlement, thus wasting precious time which should have been improved in carrying on a war without quarter. To all this the friends of the government replied that any arrangement which did not call in question the good name of the republic was preferable to the hazards of a war. No war could fail to be expensive though it were just. There were risks in all wars; the caprices of fortune must be allowed for; and, moreover, even if the administration had peremptorily declined the preliminaries which the Texans presented, the only result would have been to hasten annexation, with its consequent evils, which the ministers were now endeavoring, for the good of the country, to prevent.[1] This sort of controversy, of course, convinced nobody, but the undeniable fact remained that the administration had been willing to bargain for the independence of Texas, a thing odious to many of the governing class and probably to a majority of them.

But though the hour for the fall of Herrera seemed to have come, still the man had not appeared. There were nearly a dozen candidates for the Presidency—Herrera himself; Cuevas, his Foreign Secretary; Gómez Farías, as radical as ever; Pedraza, energetic, able, and deeply distrusted; and Generals Bravo, Rincon, Valencia, and Almonte. But stronger than any of them, with some thousands of armed men at his back, was Paredes, who bided his time. The departments, therefore, under the orders of the central gov-

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 343.

ernment, obediently voted for General Herrera, who was duly declared elected President of the republic for the remainder of Santa Anna's term, *i. e.*, until February 1, 1849.[1]

Before the formal announcement of his election, and as soon as the reports from the several departments showed what would be the result, the President received the resignations of all the members of his cabinet; and on August 14, 1845, he appointed a set of new ministers who were thought to be more "democratic" than their predecessors. The Minister of Foreign Relations was Manuel de la Peña y Peña, a lawyer of high standing, for many years a member of the Supreme Court, who had been Minister of Justice in Bustamante's second administration in 1837. He was regarded as a moderate man, rather inclined to support the church. "He will be guided in his foreign policy," Buchanan was informed, "by General Pedraza, who is decidedly in favor of an amicable arrangement with the United States."[2]

The members of Herrera's new cabinet, like those of the old, were suspected of being but lukewarm in regard to beginning a war for the recovery of Texas. They therefore felt it necessary to protest loudly their patriotic intentions; and the official newspaper, after a silence of some weeks on the subject of war, suddenly declared that the American government must now be made to understand that, accustomed as the Mexicans were to freedom and independence, they would never forgive the unparalleled offence committed by the United States, and would avail themselves of every opportunity to inflict exemplary punishment on their perfidious neighbors.[3]

Such vaguely magnificent threats evidently committed the administration to nothing, and were not very convincing to Herrera's opponents. The press, or a noisy section of it, continued to denounce the ministry as being subject to the fatal influence of Senator Pedraza and as being the cause of all the difficulties that were delaying the opening of

[1] Law of Sept. 14, 1845; Dublan y Lozano, V, 35.
[2] W. S. Parrott to Buchanan, Aug. 23, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.*
[3] Same to same, Sept. 13, 1845; *ibid.*

the Texan campaign.[1] The latter accusation was in reality very unjust, for the administration was helpless. The army, as always, was a Frankenstein monster of whom every successive ministry stood in dread, and it became more formidable than ever when an attempt was made to concentrate the reluctant troops in preparation for an advance on the Texan border. The War Department had been doing its best ever since Santa Anna's overthrow to get together an adequate army; but the mutinous temper of the leading officers tended to make the efforts of the central authorities fruitless.

General Arista, who commanded on the Rio Grande, probably had less than three thousand men under him in the late summer and autumn of 1845; but a much larger force, perhaps eight or ten thousand men, who were intended for Texas, were in or within easy reach of San Luis Potosí. As they had neither shoes nor clothing nor transport, it was difficult to move them through a barren country. The commander at San Luis was General Paredes, who for some time before the formation of the new government had expressed himself publicly and privately as hostile to the existing government, and was little disposed to move. Orders were sent him to forward troops to reinforce Arista, which he said he would obey when supplied with money and clothing. Repeated orders were then sent to him to come to the capital, but these were calmly ignored. It was rumored in the city of Mexico that General Filisola, commanding another division, had been ordered to march against Paredes; and then it was announced that Filisola had been relieved from his command and ordered to turn it over to Paredes, who was thus at the head of both divisions. That the government had decided to humor Paredes by giving him control of much the largest military force in Mexico was apparent; but the reasons for this surrender remained a mystery.

While the Mexican government was thus doing its best to carry on, in some more or less disjointed fashion, the busi-

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 544.

ness of the country, and especially was endeavoring to persuade its troops to march upon Texas, the government of the United States was still trying to restore diplomatic relations. William S. Parrott, the secret agent of the Washington government in Mexico,[1] wrote on August 16, 1845, that the President had been heard to say that, if a minister from the United States should arrive, he would be well received. Ten days later Parrott wrote that the war talk had ceased and that he had good reason to believe that the arrival of an envoy from the United States would be hailed with joy.[2]

On August 29 he wrote again that the Mexican government was the mere creature of circumstances and without any fixed principle for its guide; but that, judging from his knowledge of the men in power, and from the general and freely expressed feeling of the moment, he had no doubt an envoy from the United States would be greeted with "hearty welcome." The government, he was satisfied, was not strong enough to take a decided stand; the insubordination of Paredes was much more serious than had been supposed, for he had intercepted money and clothing sent by the government for Arista on the frontier; and a civil, not a foreign war, had begun.[3] This news was confirmed by despatches from Black, the American consul in the city of Mexico, and from Dimond, the consul at Vera Cruz.

The information that Mexico was willing to negotiate came as a perfect godsend to Polk's administration. A war

[1] Parrott was a dentist who had gone to Mexico (like many others of his calling since) to practise his profession. He afterward, according to the American minister, "engaged in mercantile business, living in a style the most luxurious and expensive, and wound up, as such persons always do, a bankrupt." He had a large claim against the Mexican government, which, the minister said, "may be, and no doubt is just to some extent, but I cannot forbear to say that it is exaggerated to a disgusting degree. To assert such a claim would subject both me and my government to ridicule if nothing worse." —(Thompson to Webster, Nov. 30, 1842; *State Dept. MSS.*) Reeves, in his *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 270, says that Polk at the time of Parrott's appointment probably knew nothing of this claim; but he gives no proof of his assertion. Parrott, for a secret agent, was a well-qualified person, for he was active, alert, knew the language and the people, and was a most voluminous correspondent. He had one serious defect. He wrote an almost illegible hand.

[2] W. S. Parrott to Buchanan, Aug. 16, 1845; Aug. 26, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.*

[3] Same to same, Aug. 29, 1845; *ibid.*

with Mexico was the last thing in the world they then desired, for it could hardly have been declared and carried on without such an active and zealous support of both houses of Congress as the President could, at that time, hardly count upon. It was doubtful whether a proposal to Congress to declare war for the failure of Mexico to settle the claims of American citizens, the only *casus belli*, would have met with popular favor; and it would, at the very least, have involved long debates in which the question of slavery and all the old controversies about Texas would certainly have been reopened. But a successful negotiation with Mexico which should result in the settlement of all pecuniary claims, the settlement of the boundary of Texas, and the acquisition of California would be a very different matter.

Parrott's despatch last mentioned reached Washington in time to be read at a cabinet meeting on the sixteenth of September, only three weeks after its date, for such were the improvements in methods of transportation by sea and within the United States.

"After much consultation," the President recorded in his diary, "it was agreed unanimously that it was expedient to re-open Diplomatic relations with Mexico; but that it was to be kept a profound secret that such a step was contemplated, for the reason mainly that if it was known in advance in the U. S. that a Minister had been sent to Mexico, it would, of course, be known to the Brittish, French, & other Foreign Ministers at Washington, who might take measures to thwart or defeat the objects of the mission. The President, in consultation with the Cabinet, agreed that the Hon. John Slidell of New Orleans, who spoke the Spanish language and was otherwise well qualified, should be tendered the mission. . . . One great object of the Mission, as stated by the President, would be to adjust a permanent boundary between Mexico and the U. States, and that in doing this the Minister would be instructed to purchase for a pecuniary consideration Upper California and New Mexico. He said that a better boundary would be the Del Norte from its mouth to the Passo, in latitude about 32° North, and thence West to the Pacific Ocean, Mexico ceding to the U. S. all the country East and North of these lines. The President said that for such a boundary the amt. of pecuniary consideration to be paid would be of small importance. *He supposed it might be had for fifteen or twenty millions, but he was ready*

*to pay forty millions for it, if it could not be had for less.* In these views the Cabinet agreed with the President unanimously." [1]

It was the intention of the President to send off Slidell at once, but the night brought better counsels. The warlike spirit of Mexican proclamations seemed to throw doubt on the readiness of the Mexican government to enter into diplomatic negotiations, and at a second meeting of the cabinet it was decided to delay sending Slidell until it should be ascertained officially from the Mexican government whether a minister would be received. Slidell was, however, to be privately notified of his appointment, and asked to hold himself in readiness to start for his post on a day's notice.[2]

That same afternoon instructions to the American consul at the city of Mexico were prepared.

"Information recently received at this department," Buchanan wrote, "both from yourself and others, renders it probable that the Mexican government may now be willing to restore the diplomatic relations between the two countries. At the time of their suspension, General Almonte was assured of the desire felt by the President to adjust amicably every cause of complaint between the governments, and to cultivate the kindest and most friendly relations between the sister republics. He still continues to be animated by the same sentiments. It was his duty to place the country in a condition successfully to resist the threatened invasion of Texas by Mexico, and this has been accomplished. He desires, however, that all existing differences should be terminated amicably by negotiation and not by the sword. He is anxious to preserve peace, although prepared for war.

"Actuated by these sentiments, the President has directed me to instruct you, in the absence of any diplomatic agent in Mexico, to ascertain from the Mexican government whether they would receive an envoy from the United States, intrusted with full power to adjust all the questions between the two governments. Should the answer be in the affirmative, such an envoy will be immediately despatched to Mexico." [3]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 34. The italics are not in the original. Slidell's name was suggested to the President by Buchanan, who spoke of him as "the best qualified man in the country for that mission, because among other reasons of his knowledge of the Spanish language."—(*Ibid.*, 222.)

[2] *Ibid.*, 35.

[3] Buchanan to Black, Sept. 17, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 12.

These instructions reached the city of Mexico on the tenth of October, and Black, the consul, lost no time in having a confidential interview with Peña y Peña, the Minister of Foreign Relations, who asked that the President's inquiry be put in writing, which was done in a note containing a quotation word for word from Buchanan's instructions. On Wednesday evening, October 15, Black called again by appointment at the minister's private residence,[1] and was handed a written reply in which the proposal of the United States was accepted in the following language:

"Although the Mexican nation is deeply injured by the United States, through the acts committed by them in the department of Texas, which belongs to this nation, my government is disposed to receive the commissioner of the United States, who may come to this capital with full powers from his government to settle the present dispute in a peaceable, reasonable, and honorable manner; thus giving a new proof that, even in the midst of its injuries, and of its firm decision to exact adequate reparation for them, it does not repel with contumely the measure of reason and peace to which it is invited by its adversary."

The note then proceeded to state that the envoy to be sent should possess dignity, prudence, and moderation; and further, that the American naval force then anchored near Vera Cruz should be withdrawn.[2] Black thought this answer satisfactory, especially in view of the conversation which followed the delivery of the note. Peña y Peña began by apologising in a way, for referring to the grievances of Mexico. If the government had only itself to consider, he said, it would have omitted these expressions, but it was bound to try to reconcile public opinion; a strong opposition was daily scrutinising and condemning every act of the government, which tried to give as little pretext as possible for criticism; and he desired Black to make this explanation to the American government. As to the person to be sent

[1] He seems to have been accompanied by Parrott, acting as his interpreter. —(W. S. Parrott to Buchanan, Oct. 11, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.*)

[2] Peña y Peña to Black, Oct. 15, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 16. The vessels were withdrawn, at the consul's suggestion, a few days later.

out, he said that it was the wish of the Mexican government, and would be for the good of both countries, that a person suitable in every respect should be sent out. Any one like Poinsett, for example, against whom the government or the people of Mexico entertained a fixed prejudice, would be a great obstacle in the way of an amicable adjustment of differences.[1]

Black of course could give no assurances as to the character of the person who would be sent to Mexico, for he had not been told who had been selected; but in fact the nominee very fairly came up to the required standard. John Slidell, the son of a New York merchant, was born in that city about 1793, graduated at Columbia College in the class of 1810, studied law, and went to New Orleans (as many other young Northern men did at about that time) in 1819. Being a capable lawyer and an active state-rights Democrat, President Jackson appointed him United States attorney for Louisiana. At the time of his selection for the mission to Mexico he was a member of the House of Representatives, where he had sat for two years. Without possessing extraordinary abilities, he had excellent manners and a good education, and gave every promise of being competent to transact business with the dignity, prudence, and moderation that the Mexican government considered so essential. Pakenham, who had every personal and official reason for being interested in the result of the mission, wrote to the Foreign Office that Slidell was very well regarded for his understanding and moderation, and that therefore his mission might be expected to be successful; and Lord Aberdeen so informed the Mexican minister in London.[2]

The official report from the American consul of his arrangement with the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations was brought to the State Department by Parrott in person, who reached Washington on Sunday evening, the ninth of November, and had a long conversation the next morning

[1] Black to Buchanan, Oct. 17, 1845; *State Dept MSS.*; extract in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 13.

[2] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Jan. 1, 1846; *Sec. de Rel. Ext. MSS.*

with the President. But unofficial information that Mexico was willing to receive a minister from the United States had preceded Parrott, for late on the previous Thursday night, the sixth of November, Bancroft had placed in the President's hands despatches from Commodore Connor, commander of the naval squadron off Vera Cruz, containing the welcome news. Not a moment was lost. The President personally wrote to Slidell in New Orleans, directing him to go at once to Pensacola and await instructions; and the Secretary of State undertook to prepare the necessary official documents without delay.[1]

The formal instructions to Slidell proved, as events turned out, to be only of interest as showing the objects which the American government had in mind in opening negotiations; but upon that point they were extremely illuminating. The first object was declared to be the settlement of the claims of American citizens, to which, it was said, Mexico had always opposed "evasions, difficulties, and delays." The Mexican government must be made to see that the "patient forbearance" of the United States could not endure much longer, and that a speedy and satisfactory adjustment must be made.

"But in what manner," the instructions continued, "can this duty be performed consistently with the amicable spirit of your mission? The fact is but too well known to the world, that the Mexican government are not now in a condition to satisfy these claims by a payment of money."

It was then pointed out that the obvious way of satisfying them was by so adjusting the boundary of the two republics as "to cast the burden of the debt due to American claimants upon their own government"; and if Mexico would only agree to the boundary claimed by Texas—that is, the line of the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source—the United States would assume the payment of all the claims.

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 91–94. Slidell had previously been notified of his appointment and had accepted. See Slidell to Buchanan, Sept. 20, 1845; Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 284.

But there was another subject "of vast importance to the United States," and that was the ownership of California. Both Great Britain and France, as Slidell was informed, had designs upon California, which was now but nominally dependent on Mexico. Between Mexico and California the United States did not intend to interfere, but "it would vigorously interpose to prevent the latter from becoming either a British or a French Colony."

"Under these circumstances," continued the Secretary of State, "it is the desire of the President that you shall use your best efforts to obtain a cession of that province from Mexico to the United States. Could you accomplish this object, you would render immense service to your country and establish an enviable reputation for yourself. Money would be no object, when compared with the value of the acquisition. . . . Should you, after sounding the Mexican authorities on the subject, discover a prospect of success, the President would not hesitate to give, in addition to the assumption of the just claims of our citizens on Mexico, twenty-five millions of dollars for the cession."[1]

These instructions, which had really been drafted some weeks before, were approved at a cabinet meeting held on Saturday, the eighth of November, and, after being copied with the greatest precautions of secrecy, were sent off late at night on the following Monday to Pensacola, where a naval vessel was lying ready for sea.[2]

So well had everything been planned, and so energetically had the President and the various officers of the government acted, that Slidell was ashore at Vera Cruz on November 29, 1845, and the news of his arrival was in the hands of the American consul in the city of Mexico on the third of

[1] Buchanan to Slidell, Nov. 10, 1845; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 71–80.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, I, 92. There was some further correspondence supplementary to these general instructions. Slidell was informed that he was to hasten negotiations, as the President wished to submit to Congress, before the end of its session, the question of claims against Mexico. He was also warned that if a settlement of the boundary could not be effected without endangering the attainment of the first two objects mentioned in the original instructions—"to counteract the influence of foreign Powers" and "to restore those relations of peace and good will which formerly existed"—he was not to sacrifice these in the pursuit of what was unattainable.—(Buchanan to Slidell, Nov. 19 and Dec. 17, 1845; Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 311, 345.)

December, precisely seven weeks from the day when Peña y Peña had expressed his willingness to receive a "commissioner of the United States." This unusual promptness, however, was not at all to the taste of the Mexican government. When Black called on the Minister of Foreign Relations to announce Slidell's arrival at Vera Cruz, the minister was plainly very much disturbed.

"He said that ought not to be; the government did not expect an envoy from the United States until January, as they were not prepared to receive him; and he desired, if possible, that he would not come to the capital, nor even disembark at this time, and that I should endeavor to prevent his doing so, as his appearance in the capital at this time might prove destruction to the government, and thus defeat the whole affair. You know the opposition are calling us traitors for entering into this arrangement with you."

Black told him that all this should have been thought of sooner, as the envoy would now be on his way to the capital; but the minister, much flurried, continued to pour out explanations and excuses.

"I know, he said, there was no time set; but from the conversations which I have had with yourself, and what I have heard from others, I had good reason to believe that the envoy would not have been appointed by your government, or, at least, not have started on his mission, until after the meeting of Congress; which, he said, he understood would not meet until the first of this month.

"He said that the government itself was well disposed, and ready to proceed in the negotiation, but that if the affair was commenced now, it would endanger its existence; that the government were preparing the thing, collecting the opinion and consent of the departments, which they expected to have finished by January, and then they would be able to proceed in the affair with more security; that the government were afraid that the appearance of the envoy at this time would produce a revolution against it, which might terminate in its destruction."[1]

All this agitated talk was evidently sincere. Herrera's administration would have been only too happy to settle all difficulties with the United States if it could have been per-

[1] Black to Buchanan, Dec. 18, 1848; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 22.

mitted to do so, but the mere knowledge that negotiations had been begun was quite likely to be a spark that would blow up the powder-magazine upon which the administration rested. The official proceedings were, therefore, purely dilatory.

Slidell reached the city of Mexico on Saturday, the sixth of December, and on the Monday he wrote the usual formal note to the Minister of Foreign Relations, enclosing a copy of his credentials, and asking that a date might be fixed at which he might be received by the President. No reply being given, he wrote again on the fifteenth of December, to which Peña y Peña answered that the matter was under consideration, and that the question whether Slidell should be received had been referred to the council of government, a very unusual proceeding. On the seventeenth their opinion was stated as follows:

"The Supreme Government is advised that the agreement which it entered into to admit a plenipotentiary of the United States with special powers to treat of the affairs of Texas, does not compel it to receive an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to reside near the Government, in which character Mr. Slidell comes according to his credentials."[1]

It was not, however, until the twentieth of December that the Minister of Foreign Relations wrote to Slidell to inform him officially that he could not be received. The refusal was based, in this note, upon the sole ground that Slidell had been commissioned as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, instead of as a commissioner, to settle "the questions relative to Texas," and it was suggested that he get new credentials.[2] Slidell, of course, had no

[1] Slidell to Buchanan, Dec. 17, 1845; *State Dept MSS.* Extracts in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 23-27. In a postscript dated December 18 Slidell says that the decision of the council of government has just been published in the newspapers; and he encloses a copy of the *Siglo XIX* containing it. In this despatch he comments on the "weakness and bad faith" of the Mexican government. It was received at the State Department January 12, 1846.

[2] Peña y Peña to Slidell, Dec. 20, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 37. In submitting the question to the council of government Peña y Peña had made the further point that Slidell's appointment was incomplete because he had not been confirmed by the United States Senate. See document dated

difficulty in showing that such a limitation as was now suggested had never been mentioned in the correspondence between the American consul and the Minister of Foreign Relations, but the troublesome question as to the next step he should take, still remained. He decided to go to Jalapa, where he could, as he said, communicate more speedily with his government, and there await its final instructions,[1] but he lingered in the city of Mexico for another three weeks, and sent home full accounts of the political situation in Mexico as he saw it. His views were naturally gloomy.

Writing on the twenty-seventh of December, he dwelt on the "unparalleled bad faith" of the Mexican government, "its gross falsification of the correspondence which led to my appointment, and the utter futility of the miserable sophistry by which it attempts to justify its conduct." His own course, he feared, might be considered too forbearing, but he was unwilling to take steps which would preclude subsequent attempts at negotiation and render war inevitable.[2] The difficulties of the situation due to party struggles were explained.

> "But," he added, "if all these parties be analyzed, they will be found to be mere personal factions, whose members, with very rare exceptions, have no other object in view than the elevation of some chief who will look with complacency upon any corruption or abuse of power that may be committed by his adherents. As for a people, in the proper sense of the term, it does not exist in Mexico, the masses are totally indifferent to all the revolutions that are going on and submit with the most stupid indifference to any masters that may be imposed upon them."[3]

While Slidell still tarried in the capital the long-expected revolt of Paredes broke out and was successfully carried through; and, as the Minister of Foreign Relations had pre-

Dec. 11, 1845; *ibid.*, 60. Before writing to Slidell Peña may have learned what the United States Constitution did provide. Slidell was confirmed soon after the Senate met.

[1] Slidell to Peña y Peña, Dec. 24, 1845; *ibid.*, 39-49.

[2] Slidell to Buchanan, Dec. 27, 1845; *ibid.*, 52.

[3] Same despatch, *State Dept. MSS.* Extracts only are contained in the document as published.

dicted, the mere act of the government in allowing a diplomatic agent of the United States to land in Mexico was put in the very front of the statement of grievances.

Paredes began his revolution in the customary manner by causing a meeting of the principal officers of the army to be held on December 14. At this meeting General Romero, commanding the department of San Luis Potosí, was put up to explain that the administration of President Herrera had lost public confidence, because it had tried to avoid a war with the United States; because it had attempted to re-establish the civic militia, which was an insult to the regular army; because it had agreed to receive a commissioner with whom to treat in regard to the loss of national integrity, and because it had provoked anarchy by encouraging factions. A "plan" was at once adopted which proclaimed that, inasmuch as the plenipotentiary of the United States had entered Mexican territory and was inhabiting the capital of the republic, and as he had come by consent of the cabinet to buy Mexican independence and nationality, the army would support the protest of the nation against all subsequent acts of the present administration, which from this date would be held as null and void. The Congress and the executive authorities, it was declared, were to cease at once from carrying on their functions, the army would occupy the capital, and an extraordinary constituent Congress, without any restriction upon its august functions, would be summoned to establish a new Constitution. As soon as it was installed, the constituent Congress was to organize an executive power, and no authority was to exist but by its sovereign sanction. Departmental authorities were to continue in power until others might be substituted for them by the national representation. The army named as its chief in this political movement General Paredes, who was invited forthwith to adhere to these proposals, the army protesting solemnly at the same time that it had no thought of the personal elevation of the chief it had selected.[1]

On the next day Paredes by a formal manifesto accepted

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 97–100.

the plan of the army, protesting his disinterestedness and want of ambition, and promising to summon the new Congress as soon as the army occupied the capital.

Herrera's government, of course, denounced Paredes for his want of patriotism in failing to push the Texan campaign, referred to him and his supporters as "shameful cowards," and bitterly contrasted his acts with his loud professions of love for the country.

"It is not," said the *Diario*, "the bad state of the Republic nor the war with Texas—in which he has never wished to take part but which he has always clamored for—that have induced General Paredes to rebel at San Luis. Other causes, more influential with him, have been the motives for his action. He doubtless hopes that as the movement to defeat General Santa Anna was initiated by him, he will become the idol of the nation; and he looks to take the place of the fallen tyrant. Fortunately the nation owes him little and has sufficiently paid him by its confidence. . . . General Santa Anna in 1841 summoned a commission in order that he might *freely* be elected for the Supreme power. To-day in like manner the proposed Congress will elect *freely* the soldier of the country, the defender of the integrity of our territory."[1]

All the authorities in the city of Mexico, and many of the authorities outside the capital, protested against the plan of San Luis. Congress on December 23 issued a manifesto denouncing the perfidy of the soldiers who had betrayed constitutional institutions by proclaiming the re-establishment of a dictatorship, summoning all the sons of the country to the support of their rights and liberty, and the defence of its institutions, declaring that all officers and soldiers of every class who failed to present themselves in support of the cause of the republic, and against the plan of San Luis, were to be degraded, and proclaiming that any act of persons under rebel authority would be null and void.[2] President Herrera also issued a proclamation of his own, denouncing Paredes personally and calling on the army to consider whether the man who had refused under false pretexts to comply with orders to reinforce Arista was likely to con-

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 540. [2] Dublan y Lozano, V, 96.

duct them to the plains of Texas.[1] He further announced that he relied confidently upon the aid of the people and the special protection of divine Providence; but nevertheless, on the twenty-fifth of December he declared the capital to be in a state of siege.

At twenty minutes before eleven on the night of December 30 the entire garrison of the city of Mexico, with the exception of the troops stationed in the National Palace, mutinied on a signal given from the citadel. On the morning of the thirty-first these latter troops also announced their adherence to the pronunciamiento, and two hours later General Herrera left the palace as a private individual. A little before four o'clock on the same afternoon General Valencia, president of the council and commander of the troops in the city of Mexico, went to the Palace accompanied by a numerous staff, and took possession (it was said) of most of the cash in the Treasury. At the same time the bells of the cathedral and all the churches were rung, and the revolution was thus fully completed without the firing of a single shot. The garrison at the capital announced that it adhered *in toto* to the plan proclaimed at San Luis Potosí on December 14 by General Paredes; it named as its chief General Valencia, who was authorized to carry it into effect with certain additions; and Generals Tornel and Almonte were sent out as a committee to meet Paredes, who was approaching the city, to inform him of these events.

Under the constitutional laws of December, 1836, the president of the council was entitled to succeed temporarily to the presidency of the republic,[2] and immediately on Herrera's resignation Valencia had occupied the Palace. But Paredes, who had been twice disappointed in the revolutions he had begun, was by no means ready "to see the feast that was preparing turned into a banquet for a rival"; and Tornel and Almonte were sent back to the city with a message to the effect that General Paredes would not submit to

[1] Herrera's manifesto of Dec. 22, 1845; *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 548.

[2] "*En las faltas temporales del Presidente de la República, gobernará el presidente del consejo.*"—(Leyes Constitucionales, &c., Art. 9; Dublan y Lozano, III, 242.)

any modification of his plan, nor listen to any suggestion of General Valencia's acting as President *ad interim*. If the garrison had been willing to support him, Valencia might have resisted; but the garrison had already sent in its adhesion to Paredes, who issued a sharp military order directing that he himself should be immediately recognised in the city of Mexico as the sole commander and legitimate authority, and that everything should be arranged for his reception in the capital on the following day, at which time he directed that a meeting be held to decide upon the definitive programme of the revolution.

Valencia, seeing that the game was up, at once left the Palace, went back to his own house, and sent Paredes an assurance of his submission, adding that if his presence was an obstacle he would leave the republic for two years. Paredes merely replied that he did not consider Valencia or anybody else an obstacle. "I am resolved," he said, "to make my ideas triumph or to perish in the attempt, and as I am determined not to prosecute anybody on account of their previous acts, so I will shoot anybody who starts out to oppose me, whether he is an archbishop, a general, a magistrate or anybody else"; and as everybody at that time believed that Paredes was quite capable of doing exactly what he said, he was at once hailed as President of the republic.[1]

The revolution had thus far followed the normal course of Mexican revolutions. The small proportion of the inhabitants of Mexico who had any political influence at all, and especially the officers of the army, had become thoroughly dissatisfied with the government; whether rightly or wrongly was a matter of no consequence. Inasmuch as nobody in Mexico had ever had the slightest confidence in elections, which always resulted in the choice of the government's candidates, there was no hope of changing the government by anything short of a revolution. The men who were in office naturally wished to hold on to them, and the people of property were unwilling to take part in a revolu-

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 553.

tion until they knew which side was likely to be successful. The revolution of 1845, like most others, was intended simply to exchange one set of rulers for another, and it began with a military mutiny. Until this military mutiny, which had originated, as all such movements usually did, outside of the city of Mexico, showed evident signs of being successful, Congress, the officers of the government, and all people of property loudly protested that they were unanimously on the side of the government. Nevertheless, secret influences were at work, and the moment the conspirators were able to win over the garrison of the city of Mexico, and the garrison proclaimed its adhesion to the revolution, all the people who had been professing themselves supporters of the government hastened to range themselves upon the side of the victorious mutineers, and the government fell like a house of cards.

On January 2, 1846, Paredes made his public entry into the city of Mexico and issued a decree prepared at a meeting of officers over which he presided, declaring that the legislative and executive powers had ceased, because the holders of them did not comply with the desires and requirements of the nation and had not sustained the dignity of its name or the integrity of its territory, and directing that representatives of the various departments should be named for the purpose of appointing a President *ad interim*. The President so appointed was to execute the laws then in existence, but he might go beyond the powers conferred by them if necessary to prepare for the defence of the national territory, and he was to summon a new Congress to meet within four months at the capital. In other words, he was made a dictator pending the meeting of Congress.[1]

Paredes at the same time named the members of the commission who were to appoint the President—two from each department—and as they were all of them persons then in the city of Mexico, they met on January 3, and unanimously went through the formality of selecting Paredes as the President *ad interim*. On the following day the commission met

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 100.

again, and Paredes was sworn in, after which he "pronounced a discourse suitable to the circumstances."[1] On January 7 he appointed his cabinet, Castillo y Lanzas being Secretary of Foreign Relations, and General Almonte Secretary of War. Tornel was made president of the council.

Castillo had been secretary of legation and chargé d'affaires in Washington.

"He is," wrote Slidell, "an intelligent and well educated gentleman, and were he permitted to exercise any control, would, as I have reason to know from free conversations with him at a time when he had no idea of being appointed to his present place, be decidedly favorable to an amicable adjustment of all questions pending between the two Governments. But Almonte is the leader of the cabinet, believed, and as I think with good reason, to entertain the most violent hostility towards the United States, and I doubt whether Castillo has sufficient energy to take any very decided stand in support of his opinions."[2]

Slidell's departure from the city of Mexico had all this time been delayed, ostensibly by his inability to procure an escort, the roads being notoriously unsafe, but in reality, as he wrote in the letter just quoted, because the Mexican government was waiting for President Polk's annual message, to see what the chances of a war over Oregon might be. The tone of that message, when it was received, of course encouraged Mexican hopes of war between the United States and Great Britain; and, as Slidell wrote a few days later, there was little prospect of a change of attitude on the part of Mexico so long as these hopes continued. But he still had some expectation that the financial embarrassments of Mexico might lead to their consenting to a negotiation.[3]

Slidell reached the pleasant town of Jalapa on the twentieth of January, and there awaited the instructions from Washington for which he had applied. It was not until

[1] See *Acta de la Junta de Representantes de los Departamentos; Ibid.*, 102.

[2] Slidell to Buchanan, Jan. 14, 1846; *State Dept. MSS.*; extract in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 53. Castillo is described by a Mexican author as a man of vast learning, but with little diplomatic skill.

[3] Slidell to Buchanan, Feb. 6, 1846; *State Dept. MSS.*; extract in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 56.

late in the month of February that he received advices from the State Department. His conduct was in all respects approved, and he was directed to renew his application to be received as minister plenipotentiary. As to confining the negotiations to the adjustment of "the imaginary rights of Mexico over Texas," that, he was instructed, could not be tolerated. The two subjects of claims and boundary "must proceed hand in hand; they can never be separated." Should the Mexican government finally refuse to receive him, he was to demand his passports and return to the United States. "It will then," said Buchanan, "become the duty of the President to submit the whole case to Congress, and call upon the nation to assert its just rights, and avenge its injured honor." [1]

In accordance with these instructions, Slidell wrote to the Minister of Foreign Relations on March 1, 1846, referring to his correspondence with Peña y Peña, and stating that his course had been approved by the President of the United States, who (in view of the change in the government of Mexico) had directed that one more effort should be made to preserve peace. He therefore again submitted the question of his being received as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary.[2]

Castillo replied in a long letter, declining to receive Slidell on various grounds. In the first place, the display of force by land and sea which the United States was making would of itself be a sufficient reason. In the next place, the course which the United States had steadily pursued in respect to the annexation of Texas, a part of the territory of Mexico, which had been hers for so long without any interruption whatever, regardless of "the most unquestionable ownership and the most uninterrupted possession," would not allow Mexico to consent to such ignominy as to discuss a settlement. And finally, the reasons given to Slidell in December for refusing to receive him were repeated. The

[1] Buchanan to Slidell, Jan. 20, 1846; same to same, Jan. 28, 1846; *ibid.*, 59–65.

[2] Slidell to Castillo, March 1, 1846; *ibid.*, 63.

decision of the Mexican government on the point was declared to be "immutable."[1]

The action of the two successive Mexican administrations in refusing to receive an American minister ended all further discussion. Their decision had plainly been dictated by the exigencies of domestic politics. The opinions of the governing class had been too clearly declared to make it possible for any government to enter at that time upon negotiations with the United States; and although the men who were actually intrusted with the responsibility of carrying on the affairs of the republic must have had some perception of the inevitable result of a conflict, they could not have remained in office for a single day if they had openly defied the public clamor for war.

There was obviously nothing for Slidell to do but to return home, and he therefore wrote to Castillo demanding his passports and defending the course which the United States had pursued with respect to Texas. Castillo replied by return of post, enclosing the passports, and saying that he thought it needless to discuss anew Slidell's arguments, as they had already been "victoriously refuted."[2] At the same time the whole correspondence was published in the *Diario del Gobierno*. At the earliest practicable day Slidell sailed from Vera Cruz, and on reaching the United States set out for Washington to explain to the President the failure of his mission and to offer his opinions as to the course which the American government should pursue.

[1] Castillo to Slidell, March 12, 1846; *ibid.*, 67.
[2] Same to same, March 21, 1846; *ibid.*, 70.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### MEXICO SEEKS FOREIGN AID

As the prospect of a war with the United States became more threatening, the successive Mexican administrations saw more and more clearly that they ran a very great risk of losing not only Texas but also a large part of their other territory. California in particular was evidently indefensible against a naval force, and New Mexico was too remote for succor. The only way to guard against such dangers was by securing foreign help; and, indeed, in the earlier efforts of Great Britain and France to adjust the disputes between Mexico and Texas, a foreign guarantee of the northern boundary had actually been offered. Thus in the interview between Lord Aberdeen and the Mexican minister in London, on May 29, 1844, the former had gone so far as to say that if Mexico would acknowledge the independence of Texas, England, and very likely France, would oppose annexation to the United States, and that he would endeavor that France and England should jointly guarantee the independence of Texas and the integrity of Mexican territory.[1] At the same time he had proposed to the French government "a joint operation on the part of Great Britain and France in order to acknowledge the independence of Texas, on a guarantee being jointly given by us that that independence shall be respected by other nations, and that the Mexico-Texian boundary shall be secured from further encroachments." And a few days later, in an interview with Ashbel Smith, of Texas, he had proposed a "diplomatic act" by which England and France, acting with Texas and

[1] *Memorandum of Conversation*, in R. D. Adams, 168.

Mexico, were to secure and guarantee the independence of Texas and settle its boundaries.[1]

So also in the memorandum of "points on the settlement of which the Mexican government might agree to grant the Independence of Texas," discussed in the autumn of 1844 between Bankhead and the expiring administration of Santa Anna, one of the clauses of the proposed arrangement was that Mexico should receive an indemnity for the loss of Texas, and also—

"the guarantee of England and France united, that under no pretext whatever shall the Texans ever pass the Boundaries marked out. The same nations shall also guarantee to Mexico the Californias, New Mexico and the other points of the Northern frontier bordering on the United States, according to a Treaty to be drawn up for that purpose.—If the United States carry into effect the annexation of Texas, to the North American Union, England and France will assist Mexico in the contest which may be thereby brought on."[2]

The idea of any guarantee was, however, soon abandoned, partly because France was lukewarm, partly because of warnings from the British and French ministers in Washington that the least suggestion of foreign interference in the matter of Texas would tend to Clay's defeat for the presidency and thus to the immediate annexation of Texas, and partly because Santa Anna persisted in announcing his intention to make war at once.[3] At the end therefore of September, 1844, Bankhead had been instructed to say that if Santa Anna—

"were to take the rash step of invading Texas with a view to its forcible reconquest, and if, by so doing, he should find himself involved in difficulties with other Countries, he must not look for the support of Great Britain in aiding him to extricate himself from those difficulties."[4]

But in spite of this and other later warnings to the effect that Mexico would be left to herself if she did not heed

[1] Aberdeen to Cowley, May 31, 1844; *ibid.*, 171. Smith to Jones, June 24, 1844; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1152.
[2] Bankhead to Aberdeen, Nov. 20, 1844; E. D. Adams, 188.
[3] See Vol. I, pages 659–661.
[4] Aberdeen to Pakenham, Sept. 30, 1844; E. D. Adams, 180.

the advice of her friends in Europe, the Mexican representatives in London and Paris continued to haggle over territorial guarantees by the European powers as a condition to an abandonment of their projects for a reconquest of Texas. In repeated interviews with the French and English Secretaries of Foreign Affairs they argued that no reliance was to be placed on the good faith of the Texans. If Texan independence were recognized to-day by Mexico, what was to prevent those people from seeking to-morrow annexation to the United States? Would not the mere fact of recognition by Mexico be cited as a proof that Texas was at complete liberty to dispose of her own fortunes? And would a mere treaty of peace and friendship restrain the Texans from new aggressions, like the expedition to Santa Fe and the expedition to Mier? Nothing, it was said, would hold the Texans back but the fear of physical force, which force France and Great Britain must agree to furnish if they wished to see peace and to see Texas universally recognized as an independent state.[1]

By the end of November, 1844, the news of Polk's election to the presidency had reached Europe, and foreign governments began to see that the United States was fully committed to the policy of annexation, and that any attempt by European powers to prevent it might only result in a war, for which the people of France, at any rate, had no desire.

"It appears to me," wrote Maximo Garro, the Mexican minister in Paris, "that the cabinet of the Tuileries, even though it might wish to join with that of London in taking up arms in opposition to the annexation of Texas, could never do so without exciting a general clamor against any such policy. All parties, without exception, would accuse it of forgetting that the interests of France require that it shall not take part in a struggle which, whatever its result, will weaken her two maritime rivals and will consequently contribute to the growth of her own power. . . .

"Should there be a rupture between the English and the Americans,

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Jan. 1, June 1, and July 1, 1845; Garro to same, March 25 and June 17, 1845.—(*Secretaría de Relaciones Esteriores, México, MSS.*)

we ought to be able to count on an alliance with the former; but if the latter should take up arms to oppose our projected expedition for the reconquest of Texas, I believe that Great Britain will only present itself as a *pacific mediator*, and that it would redouble its efforts to have Mexico recognise the independence of that Department, offering in that event to intervene in a more efficacious manner." [1]

William R. King, the American minister in Paris, held similar opinions.

"There should be no wavering," he wrote privately to the Secretary of State, "on the subject of the annexation of Texas. The growling of the British Lion should only stimulate to immediate action. To falter in our course from apprehension of her hostility, would disgrace us in the eyes of all Europe. The act accomplished, England will complain, perhaps threaten, and her newspapers will be lavish in their abuse; but that will be all; for with all her power, she can but feel that a war with us would be more prejudicial to her interest than with any other nation. She will not risk the consequences. I am aware that she is exerting herself to induce France to make common cause with her on the subject of Texas and that Mr. Guizot is much inclined to do so; but it will not succeed. It would shock the French nation, which detests all alliances with England; and the King is too wise, and too prudent to place himself in a position which would go far towards destroying the dynasty." [2]

In fact, though neither Señor Garro nor Mr. King was aware of it, the French government had already politely declined to make common cause with Great Britain. Lord Cowley, the British ambassador, early in December, 1844, reported that he had asked the direct question whether France would "act in concert with us in any negotiation with the Mexican Govt. for the purpose of obtaining from them the acknowledgment" of Texan independence. "Any negotiation" probably seemed to Guizot a dangerously vague phrase, and he therefore explained just how far France would go.

"Undoubtedly," he said to Cowley, "we will both use our best efforts for that purpose, and will even refuse to recognise the annexa-

[1] Garro to Minister of Relations, Dec. 18, 1844; *ibid.*
[2] King to Calhoun, Dec. 28, 1844; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, 1013.

tion of Texas to the United States; but, as a Question of Peace or War, I am not prepared to say that its junction with the American States is of sufficient importance to us to justify our having recourse to arms in order to prevent it." [1]

Aberdeen, however, was very unwilling to abandon his project of a joint guarantee by Great Britain and France, which he still hoped would result in preserving the existence of Texas as an independent nation. But to attain that end the first essential was evidently to gain the assent of Mexico; and Aberdeen thought it necessary to use plain language in warning the Mexican authorities of the dangerous consequences of the course they seemed bent on pursuing. To the British minister in Mexico he wrote:

"You will also clearly explain to the Mexican Gov^t. that they must not count upon the assistance of Gt. Britain, whose friendly advice they have constantly neglected in enabling them to resist any attack which may at any time, now or hereafter, be made upon Mexico by the U. States, since they have wilfully exposed themselves to such attacks by omitting to make a friend and dependent of Texas while it was yet time." [2]

To the Mexican minister in London similar language was used, but the door of hope was held open. In a conversation at the Foreign Office, Aberdeen denounced the folly of an attempt to reconquer Texas.

"What had Mexico to hope from such an undertaking? Not only would she never recover that territory, but in the course of the war with the United States in which she would be involved she would probably lose other provinces and especially the Californias. These and no others would be the results, truly disastrous for Mexico, if she persisted in so imprudent a policy. How different would the conditions be if she would listen to the voice of reason and decide once for all to recognise the independence of Texas! . . . In that event, as he had told me several times, it might be possible, with the co-operation of France, to enter into arrangements for guaranteeing at the proper time the independence of Texas and the territory of Mexico. The recognition of the independence of that country is therefore the only

[1] Cowley to Aberdeen, Dec. 2, 1844; E. D. Adams, 190.
[2] Aberdeen to Bankhead, Dec. 31, 1844; *ibid.*, 192.

course which reason, prudence and sane policy commend to Mexico —following the example of other countries in the like circumstances. It was well for England that she recognised the independence of her former colonies when she saw it was hopeless to reconquer them; and it was well for Spain that she did the same in respect to hers. 'Now,' continued Lord Aberdeen, 'if Mexico persists in her desperate projects, it may not be impossible that England and France will resolve to oppose both annexation to the United States and reconquest by Mexico. . . . I have spoken of the Californias. You may be aware that offers of that country have been made to England by the Mexican inhabitants themselves; as also proposals for establishing colonies there under our protection. Acting in this matter in the honorable spirit in which I hope we always act, we have closed our ears to these proposals and offers. But must we let our fair dealing serve only to enable some one else to take possession of that territory? The attack of Commodore Jones in time of peace shows you what you must expect from the preposterous war (*la insensata guerra*) with the United States in which you wish to engage.' "[1]

Aberdeen's rather vague suggestions naturally did not suffice for the Mexican minister, and he asked what guarantees might be counted on. Aberdeen replied that England alone would not engage in war with the United States, though he would not say so to them.

"I asked His Lordship what was the disposition of France. He replied that when M. Guisot was here he talked with him at length about the business, and although in general he agreed to co-operate with England on the question of guarantees, it must be confessed he would not go to the length of binding himself to make war."[2]

Thus matters stood during the winter, but late in March, 1845, after the news of the passage of the annexation resolutions by Congress had reached Europe, accompanied by the inaugural address of the new President, the Mexican minister in Paris had an interview with King Louis Philippe, which he reported in the following dramatic form to his government:

[1] Tomás Murphy to Minister of Relations, Jan. 1, 1845; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.* The reference to offers of California evidently relates to the request for a protectorate made through Forbes, of which Aberdeen had received information on Dec. 13, 1844. See page 50 above.

[2] Same despatch from Murphy. Guisot accompanied Louis Philippe on a state visit to Queen Victoria, in the latter part of September, 1844.

"'*Eh bien*, M. Garro, is your new administration going to recognise the independence of Texas so as to put a stop to annexation to the United States? It cannot be prevented in any other way.'

"'I don't know of anything, Sir, *up to the present time*, which leads me to suppose that the present government is any more disposed than the former one to abandon the defence of our just rights over that territory.'

"'Why, what hope have you of reconquering it? The Americans will never allow it, and a war with them would lead to consequences infinitely serious and disastrous for Mexico, for she would run the risk of losing a great part of her present possessions.'"

After some further talk of the advantages to Mexico of recognizing Texas, which, Garro said, would be illusory unless France and England guaranteed the stipulations of any treaty that might be made, the King spoke of the difficulty of conquering Texas without a navy capable of dealing with the American navy, and of the foolish obstinacy Spain had displayed in refusing to recognise the independence of her former colonies.

The King continued:

"'To describe the kind of obstinacy which prevents one from seeing what is evident, we have a word in French which is very easy to translate into Spanish—*infatuation*. This *infatuation* prevents you from recognising what everybody else sees; that is, that you have lost Texas irrevocably. If I urge you to recognise her independence, it is because I believe that advantages will result to Mexico, in whose happiness I take great interest. If a barrier is once established between Mexico and the United States, they will have no excuse for mixing in your affairs, and they will let you live in peace.'

"'Sir, I beg your Majesty to let me ask one question, and allow me to send your answer to my government, so that they may know what they can in any event rely on. If Mexico should decide to recognise the independence of Texas, would your Majesty's government and that of Great Britain *guarantee formally* the perpetuity of the boundaries of the new state?'

"'No, no. Any such formal guarantee might give rise to an intervention, and I don't like interventions; because I know what they cost in blood and treasure. Without this formal guarantee, the arrangements you may make would afford you the necessary security.'

"'Sir, I beg your Majesty to believe that my question was only for the purpose of informing my government what it could hope for in the *hypothesis* which I have no grounds for foreseeing——'

"The King walked away, repeating that he was very sincerely interested in the happiness of the republic.

"Before closing this despatch I must tell your Excellency that before the King came up to speak to me he had been talking for some time with the English Ambassador who, when His Majesty left him, came up to me and asked me what I thought about Texan affairs. I told him frankly my opinion and my astonishment at the recognition—under Lord Palmerston's *Whig* administration (the Ambassador Lord Cowley is of the *Tory* party) which wished to abolish negro slavery—of a state that had established slavery where it did not exist before. Lord Cowley, pretending not to understand my observation, said: 'But really now, how does the Mexican government expect to conquer Texas?' (Your Excellency will note that this was almost exactly the same question with which the King began his conversation.) 'By employing all her resources,' I replied, 'to accomplish it.' 'Yes, but with these resources you have not been able to do much so far, and I am afraid that, in view of all the circumstances, you will not be more fortunate in future.'

"I confess that I could not find any entirely satisfactory answer to this simple remark."[1]

A few days after this interview, all idea of giving Mexico any guarantees against the possible encroachments of the United States was definitely abandoned, as the French government firmly refused to join in the project. Lord Aberdeen, however, was not yet willing to give up entirely all hopes of continuing Texas as an independent state. He therefore proposed that Great Britain and France should unite in trying once more to secure an acknowledgment of Texan independence from Mexico, but upon the distinct understanding that there should be no responsibility on the part of either of the European powers. Both governments on several occasions had been told positively that Mexico would not recognise Texas without a guarantee of her good behavior; but Aberdeen doubtless thought it worth while, under the hopeless circumstances of Mexico, to make one more attempt.

"Her Majesty's Government," he wrote, "would not propose to enter into any guarantee whatever with respect to either of the States,

[1] Garro to Minister of Relations, March 25, 1845; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.* Italics in original.

whether to secure to Mexico the inviolability of Her frontier against Texas, or to secure to Texas its frontier against the United States or Mexico. In fact H. M. Gov[t]. would not be disposed to place themselves in any respect in a position which might give to Mexico or to Texas the power of hereafter calling upon Great Britain, as a matter of right, for her protection and succour against encroachment on the part of any other Powers, nor even of leading the Mexican Gov[t]. to hope that such succour might be afforded. . . . They would merely wish to exert all the weight of their moral influence, added to that of France, in order to secure the present pacification and future stability both of Mexico and Texas." [1]

Guizot, of course, agreed to this proposal, which was exactly in line with what his government desired and had offered; and on the first day of May instructions were sent to Bankhead directing him to urge upon the Mexican government the importance of haste in seizing this last chance of safety.[2]

By the same packet that carried Aberdeen's instructions, the Mexican minister in London wrote to notify his government of the change in the attitude of Peel's administration, which he thought was not surprising, as they had always declared they would not act alone, and France had undoubtedly refused to co-operate in the plan of an absolute guarantee.[3]

These letters were crossed on the Atlantic by "most secret" circular instructions from the Mexican government to its diplomatic agents in England, France, and Spain, advising them of the propositions just submitted by Texas through Captain Elliot.[4] The Mexican President, it was stated in these instructions,

"is disposed to enter into a treaty with Texas suitable to the honor and dignity of Mexico, thus avoiding all the evils and complications of a war, while he hopes to be able to succeed in preventing the annexation of that department to the United States, and in the meantime has succeeded in delaying it for the present. . . . Your Excellency will endeavor to ascertain the spirit of the government to which you

[1] Aberdeen to Cowley, April 15, 1845; E. D. Adams, 204.
[2] Aberdeen to Bankhead, May 1, 1845; *ibid.*, 205.
[3] Murphy to Minister of Relations, May 1, 1845; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.*
[4] Cuevas to Garro, *muy reservado*, April 29, 1845; *ibid.*

are accredited and ascertain the terms upon which a treaty might be made with England, France and Spain . . . which will assure to Mexico the inviolability of the territory she now possesses."

Spain, of course, was hopelessly incapable of entering into any engagement of the kind suggested.

"This unhappy nation," Gorostiza, now Mexican minister in Madrid, had written some weeks earlier, "torn for so many years past by civil war, is at present in too precarious a position, too weak and without resources to note and weigh the serious events which are taking place on the Continent of America. Thus it is that although the question of the annexation of Texas to the United States has attracted the attention of Her Majesty's government on account of its importance and on account of the ambitious tendencies which the dishonorable (*desleal*) conduct of the Washington cabinet towards Mexico discloses, it is not to be expected that it will deal with the matter with the energy that could be desired, and still less that it will be disposed to take up arms to prevent the usurpation which is projected by our Anglo-American neighbors." [1]

France, for different reasons, was equally unwilling to become involved in war. In reply to a verbal request to Guizot for a definite statement, he was reported to have answered as follows:

"Neither the King's government nor that of Great Britain (to whom this question is of more interest) can *ever* give such a guarantee as will, in certain events, compel them to intervene with force of arms. No: *such a guarantee is impossible*, and you can readily understand the reasons that forbid it, when you consider present circumstances and the difficulties inherent in the parliamentary system etc., etc.; but the Mexican government may count upon the *moral influence* of France and England—upon their good offices, their friendly counsels, their energetic remonstrances to prevent the Texans from violating treaties." [2]

Great Britain perhaps might have been willing to take a much bolder stand if she could have felt sure of France; but without France at her side, the British government had always refused to act. The Mexican agents abroad believed that the secret of this refusal was the very slight reliance

[1] Gorostiza to Minister of Relations, Feb. 20, 1845; *ibid.*
[2] Garro to same, June 23, 1845; *ibid.* Italics in original.

that could be placed by England on French support. They reported that most Frenchmen, so far as they thought about the business at all, were rather pleased than otherwise at the idea of Texas being annexed to the United States, simply because it was displeasing to England. What the immense majority of Frenchmen then wanted was to see England humiliated. Louis Philippe and his cabinet, though some of them, in the bottom of their hearts, had not forgotten Waterloo, did what was possible to bring about the *entente cordiale* of which the King talked so much. An informal friendly understanding was entirely in line with their general policy of cautious conservatism; but if the country was not back of them, there was a point beyond which the French government would not have dared to go in support of Great Britain.

The British government, it was said, were perfectly aware of this attitude on the part of the French people, and they were afraid that in the event of war with the United States France might not only fail to make common cause with Great Britain, but might even seek revenge, as in 1778, by again making an American alliance.

"It is therefore not surprising," wrote Tomás Murphy, "that the English minister looks with terror upon anything that may expose him to a war with the United States, unless he first comes to a complete understanding with France; not because he needs her physical force in a conflict with the United States, but because he must commit her in such manner that she will not join with the enemy's forces and so bring on a general conflagration throughout the world, which would involve incalculable consequences." [1]

And Murphy in his next despatch expressed the opinion that if Aberdeen could have carried France along with him, war with the United States would not have stood in his way, but that as this was impossible he was greatly embarrassed.[2]

When, therefore, the news reached the Foreign Office that,

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Oct. 1, 1845; *ibid.*

[2] *Nada le importaría esa guerra si pudiese arrastrar tras sí á la Francia, pero no siendo esto posible, la cuestion por cierto toma un carácter bien embarazoso para su señoría.*—(Murphy to Minister of Relations, Nov. 1, 1845; and to the same effect, Garro to same, May 30, 1845; *ibid.*)

although the proposals of the Texan government to abandon annexation to the United States upon condition of being recognized as independent had been favorably received by Mexico, yet the unanimous expression of popular feeling in Texas was against these proposals, Aberdeen saw his whole policy in ruins. He had wished to build up a buffer state and to limit the growth of the United States, but his instruments had all failed him. France, whom he may have suspected of treachery, would not take a firm stand; the people of Texas plainly showed their unwillingness to assume the rôle of a buffer state; and Mexico had never been ready to take any step at the time when the British government wished it to move. He was therefore very much disposed to blame the Mexicans. "You always do everything too late," he told Murphy; and he showed him newspaper reports of the public meetings in Texas held in favor of annexation. It was too late, he said, to think of a joint guarantee; there was no hope that France would agree to it, and England, as he had always told Murphy, would not act alone.[1]

But Lord Aberdeen's determination not to interfere was sorely tried when he began to see, with increasing clearness, that one inevitable result of war between Mexico and the United States must be the annexation of California to the Union. All he could do, however, was to advise delay. A declaration of war, he told the Mexicans, would immediately be followed by the occupation of California, the bombardment of Vera Cruz, and the blockade of all ports; and neither England nor France could interfere if the annexation of Texas had once become a *fait accompli*.

"It follows," wrote Murphy, "that England, and therefore France, will submit in patience to the annexation [of Texas] and the defeat (*desoire*) of their plan of intervening to prevent it. Still, I think I can assure your Excellency that although Lord Aberdeen—fearing that the Californias may fall into the power of the Americans—advises Mexico to refrain from declaring war, and watches in a passive attitude the course of events, he would at heart rejoice if war should take place and our country should prove successful."[2]

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, July 1, 1845; *ibid.*
[2] Same to same, Aug. 1, 1845; *ibid.*

But notwithstanding all the discouraging reports which the Mexican government received from Europe, it resolved, as soon as it was definitely informed that the Texas convention had voted to accept the American proposals, to make one more appeal to the European powers.

In despatches to the Mexican ministers in France and England, the Minister of Foreign Relations declared that, in view of the consummation of the act of usurpation of the department of Texas, no recourse was left but that of war with the United States. As that nation had observed a dishonorable and perfidious conduct toward Mexico, and had no other object than to possess itself of as much as possible of Mexican territory, the republic would be unworthy of a place among civilized nations were it not resolved to prosecute the war with vigor. A body of fourteen thousand men was on the march for the frontier, and six thousand more would shortly follow them. The government of the republic had sought to adopt the advice of France and England in the matter of Texas, and it flattered itself, therefore, that these governments would now show themselves favorable to the cause of the Mexican nation, which it was hoped would have their sympathy and moral support.[1]

To London, in addition, was sent another and "most secret" instruction. The Americans, it was said, had officially announced their intention of taking the Californias.

"It is therefore indispensable that your Excellency shall, in the manner you may deem most opportune and respectful, give H. M. Government to understand that Mexico will receive their cooperation to prevent the loss of that important part of her territory, as a proof of the good relations that exist between the two countries.[2]

A copy of the first of these important documents was sent to Lord Aberdeen, and Murphy waited a few days before calling on him, so that it might be translated in the Foreign

[1] Cuevas to Garro, July 30, 1845, *reservado; ibid.* Also duplicate to Murphy of same date.

[2] Cuevas to Murphy, July 30, 1845, *muy reservado; ibid.*

Office. When he called, Aberdeen said that he saw from this paper that the Mexican government considered war inevitable, and that they asked for the sympathy and moral support of the British government in the struggle; but he did not see clearly what practical application that request could have. Murphy said he had something to propose. It was evident that the ambitious views of the United States were not limited to the violent and infamous robbery of Texas; California was also the object of their avarice, and it was certain that as soon as war was formally declared it would be the target for their attacks. Mexico would not neglect so important a point, and would defend it by all the means in her power, in spite of the difficulties due to the distance of that part of the republic from the seat of government. But to defend California effectually naval forces were essential, and Mexico had none, so that the help of some friendly naval power was needed. This he was instructed to ask of Great Britain.

Aberdeen said that this would be taking part in the war between Mexico and the United States, which Murphy could not but admit. He suggested, however, that if the British government objected to war, some other plan might be adopted, "some combination which would give England the right to repel, even by force, the attack which the Americans would not fail to make on Mexico, without thereby losing the neutral character she wishes to preserve."

Aberdeen rose to the bait at once. There had been, he said, a plan of colonization made up by the English consul in the city of Mexico, Mr. Mackintosh, a partner of the firm of Manning & Marshall, which Mr. Bankhead had forwarded with a view to finding out how far the British government would favor it; and he sent for Bankhead's despatch and read it to Murphy.[1] Murphy, who had known nothing of Mackintosh's proposal, was quick to see the point.

[1] This was Bankhead's despatch of July 31, 1845, to which no reply was given (in writing) either to Bankhead or the promoters.—(E. D. Adams, 253.) It seems probable, however, that Lord Aberdeen may have talked to members of the firm in London.

"Well, my Lord, I said, if the Mexican government agrees to that, your Lordship can see that you have there an opportunity under which England might put itself forward as protecting British interests, and might consequently oppose an attack on California by the United States, without thereby taking any part in the war."

But Aberdeen saw difficulties in the way. He remarked that if the grant to British subjects had been made some time before, the matter would be simpler; but if made just at this time it would be regarded as made in view of present circumstances, and would give just cause of complaint to the United States. If war with America was to be the result, the subject would have to be looked at for a long time, even if Mexico offered California to England as a gift, for England would not go to war alone. Now, if France would join, it would be very different. Murphy asked what was to be done to accomplish the object. Aberdeen remained silent for some time, and finally promised to sound Guizot.

At an interview a few days later, reported in the same despatch, Aberdeen said he had sent a message to Guizot, but had received no answer. The policy of France generally, he considered, was to keep in accord with the United States. He wished Mexico would present some definite proposal showing how England could co-operate. Any project of colonization or sale made at this time would justly offend the United States. He would consider what could be done; the matter was very serious and needed reflection; it was necessary to watch the course of events, and in the meantime Mexico ought not to rush hastily into war.

Murphy left him firmly convinced that the British government would frankly and openly take part in the war so as to prevent the United States from absorbing the Californias, if only it were not held back by France; but as to the helpful attitude of France, he had the gravest doubts.[1]

However, as time went on, Aberdeen expressed himself more and more positively as being unwilling to intervene in any way between Mexico and the United States. Murphy quoted him as saying that he did not doubt the justice of the

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Oct. 1, 1845; *Sec. Rel Ext. MSS.*

Mexican cause, but that it would be Quixotic for England and France to act upon that ground alone. As for the interest they had in seeing that California did not fall into the hands of the United States, this was hardly enough to run the risk of a war, with its incalculable consequences. No doubt they could never look with indifference upon that fine country in American hands, but there was a great distinction between that and a willingness to risk a disastrous war.

However, a hint from Lord Aberdeen that something might yet be done by taking advantage of the decree of April 12, 1837, under which the holders of Mexican bonds were authorized to locate land in various parts of Mexico, including California, set the Mexican minister to work on another plan. He learned that Mr. Powles, vice-chairman of the Mexican bondholders' committee, and Mr. Price, a member of the firm of Manning & Marshall, had seen Aberdeen, and that he had expressed an active interest in the subject. Accordingly, with the aid of these two gentlemen, a plan was drawn up as follows:

A company was to be formed to acquire from the Mexican government 50,000,000 acres of land in California. This land was to be paid for as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| In deferred Mexican bonds | £5,000,000 |
| In cash | 1,250,000 |
| | £6,250,000 |

The cash was to be payable to Mexico in instalments, and was to be borrowed by the company at three per cent interest, the British government guaranteeing the loan. How the British government was to be persuaded to guarantee such a loan did not appear, nor did Murphy very clearly see how Great Britain could intervene to prevent the sovereignty over California passing from Mexico to the United States, provided the interests of British subjects were not thereby put in peril. However, the only question with Lord Aberdeen was to find some way of thwarting American

expansion, without at the same time risking a war. He even ventured the impossible suggestion that California might set up an independent government which could be recognized by Mexico and its independence guaranteed by France and England.

"Lord Aberdeen," wrote Murphy, "has been reduced to inventing various plans which on the one hand may prevent the dreaded seizure of California by the Americans, and on the other, may not involve England in serious controversies with them. It is not easy to find such a combination, but I believe I am not mistaken in saying that he thinks of nothing else." [1]

But Murphy, of course, did not know that the subject of intervention to save California from the encroaching Americans had been the subject of a discussion in the cabinet, which had ended in the decision to do nothing so long as the Oregon question remained open. There was strong pressure brought to bear from many different sources, there were vague tales in the newspapers of British efforts to acquire "the magnificent province of California," and it was urged that the prospect of a war between Mexico and the United States offered an assured means of converting dreams into realities, and of securing, by a grant from Mexico, an interest in that great and undeveloped land.[2]

Lord Aberdeen's son, writing of the cabinet discussion over the proposal to establish a British colony in California, says:

"Nor was Sir Robert Peel wholly undazzled by the prospect. Lord Aberdeen however maintained that although had the interest already existed, it would be right to maintain it, its establishment at this

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Nov. 1, 1845; *ibid.*

[2] A French newspaper, early in March, 1845, stated that it appeared from Santa Anna's correspondence (then recently seised) that he had been on the eve of ceding California to perfidious Albion for the sum of $25,000,000, "of which he had reserved for himself a considerable portion." This was copied a day or two later in the English press, and a question was asked in the House of Commons concerning it. Sir Robert Peel, for the government of the day, and Lord Palmerston, for the former government, declared the story to be "as utterly without foundation as any report that ever was invented."—(Hansard, 3 ser., LXXVIII, 431, March 7, 1845.)

moment and in such a manner would be little less hostile than a declaration by England and France that they would not permit the conquest of California; which would virtually be a declaration of war against the United States. But even this he would prefer to the creation of an unreal interest for political purposes. The grant might create a very pretty quarrel, but no amount of privileges bestowed by Mexico would suffice to keep out American settlers, who would probably be too powerful for the English. But, above all, while the Oregon question was still capable of a peaceful settlement, he deprecated a measure which would practically render such a settlement impossible. Should the negotiation respecting it end in war, the offers of Mexico should be at once accepted and the active co-operation of Mexican forces on the South West frontier of the United States encouraged, as a formidable diversion of the American forces." [1]

This, then, was the final decision of the British government, but it involved some embarrassment to their agents in America, and especially to Sir George Seymour, the admiral in command of the naval squadron on the Pacific coast. He was left wholly without instructions in reference to California, and all he knew of the policy of his government was derived from the copy of Lord Aberdeen's instructions of December 31, 1844, which, late in the year 1845, Bankhead sent him from Mexico.

From these instructions the admiral gathered that while the separation of California from Mexico was regarded as probably inevitable, it was for the Mexican government alone to take measures for providing against such a contingency; that Great Britain had no more ground for interfering to preserve California to Mexico than it had a right to excite or encourage the inhabitants to separate from Mexico; and that if Mexico chose to be wilfully blind it could not be helped. A policy of complete non-interference thus seemed to be prescribed, although the British minister had been enjoined to keep his attention "vigilantly alive" to every credible report of occurrences in California, and especially with respect to the proceedings of American citizens settled in that province, who, it was thought, were "likely to play a prominent part in any proceeding which may take

[1] Gordon's *Aberdeen*, 183.

place there, having for its object to free the Province from the yoke of Mexico." [1]

In the spring of 1846 Admiral Seymour, still without any later instructions, was rendered anxious by the increase of the United States naval forces in the Pacific, and he wrote urging that reinforcements be sent him. Again, in the month of June, he wrote that he had not deemed it advisable to proceed to California "under the views expressed by the Earl of Aberdeen to her Majesty's Minister in Mexico, deprecating interference while California formed a part of the Mexican Republic." [2] This, of course, is proof positive that no instructions in reference to California of a date later than December 31, 1844, had reached him, much as he must have desired to learn what was expected of the ships under his command.

The British policy of waiting to see what would happen to Oregon before deciding what to do about California involved also the necessity, or at least the desirability, of preventing Mexico from beginning hostilities prematurely. The news, therefore, that the American government had offered to resume diplomatic relations, and to send John Slidell as minister to Mexico, fitted in exactly with Aberdeen's plans. He hoped that everything might be gained by negotiation, especially time, and he was careful to warn the Mexicans to go slowly. Murphy, the Mexican minister, having referred in conversation to the Oregon dispute,

"Lord Aberdeen replied that England would do everything compatible with her honor and her interest to avoid a conflict, and that he believed and hoped the United States, after all, would not disturb the peace between the two countries; that at any rate there would be a whole year in which to negotiate on the subject; that within the year either the United States would submit the point to the arbitration of some third power, or they would agree on some honorable and convenient division of the disputed territory; and that if neither of these things were done (though he was sure they would be) then God knew what would happen. His Lordship continued, 'So far as concerns

[1] Aberdeen to Bankhead, Dec. 31, 1844; E. D. Adams, 249.

[2] Seymour to Corry, June 13, 1846; *ibid.*, 258. See also letter from Lord Alcester in *Century Magazine*, XL, 794.

your negotiation with the United States *as it is always your custom to go slow, you might now do so from policy.*' "[1]

Nothing more was said about grants of land in California or projects of colonization. The European governments waited for news from America.

Toward the end of January, 1846, Murphy received instructions from his government, written just before Slidell's arrival at Vera Cruz. Nothing, he was told, had yet been heard from the United States as to the arrival of "a commissioner to settle the pending questions," but the American ships of war had been withdrawn from before Vera Cruz. There were rumors that General Taylor was advancing from Corpus Christi, but this was supposed to be due to the fact that he had not yet been informed of the arrangement to receive the American commissioner. Nothing had been omitted, so far as the scanty resources of the Treasury would permit, to provide for the defence and security of the Californias. A military expedition was preparing, part of which was already at Acapulco, and would proceed to its destination as soon as possible; "but as perchance it may not be sufficient to ward off a *coup de main* by the Americans, in case hostilities should be begun, it is indispensable to rely on the assistance which the government hopes to obtain from Great Britain and France."[2]

There was really nothing new in all this, but Murphy duly called at the Foreign Office, and then wrote that he had nothing to add to the information he had previously given. The Foreign Secretary still strongly objected to the Americans taking California, and would be glad to employ the power of Great Britain to prevent it; but he would not dare to take such a step, as he feared a war with the United States. But, added Murphy, "this consideration would not stop him if he could count on the co-operation of France," and recent speeches of Guizot's, in which he had

[1] Italics in the original. *Ya que siempre andan Vmds. despacio por hábito, ahora pueden hacerlo por cálculo.*—(Murphy to Minister of Relations, Jan. 1, 1846; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.*)

[2] Peña y Peña to Murphy, Nov. 28, 1845; *ibid.* The expedition from Acapulco never got away from that port.

deplored the spirit of aggression that prevailed in the United States, furnished some ground for hope that a change in the policy of France might be expected.

The situation, therefore, so far as the Mexican representatives in Europe could see it, was thus summed up:

"Our position under present circumstances appears to me to be as follows: England will do nothing, either directly or indirectly, to forestall the usurpation of California so long as the Oregon question remains unsettled. If war breaks out, all difficulty on the part of this cabinet will have ceased, and there is no doubt that one of their first objects will be, in that event, to prevent that usurpation. If on the contrary the dispute over Oregon is amicably settled, England will find herself more free to act in respect to California—openly and directly in case France continues in the line of policy she has just adopted and lends her aid—or indirectly by means of some plan of Colonization in California." [1]

Thus all the calculations of the Mexican agents and their fond hopes of foreign aid rested entirely upon the result of the pending negotiations over the Oregon question. Without foreign aid, European observers at least were convinced that the result of a war between the United States and Mexico could not be doubtful; for in every element of material strength, whether in numbers, in wealth, in shipping, in manufactures, or in the means of transportation, the superiority of the United States was overwhelming.

In the first place, the population of Mexico was believed to be almost stationary. It was, in fact, probably slowly increasing, as a census in the year 1854 subsequently indicated; and it may be estimated from the result of that census, combined with earlier statistics, that the population in 1846 was not far from 8,000,000.[2] The population of the United States, on the other hand, chiefly as the result of

[1] Murphy to Minister of Relations, Feb. 1, 1846; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.*

[2] An effort was made in 1839 to ascertain the population of Mexico, and the figures (which of course included an estimate for Texas) amounted to 7,044,140. In 1854 the census showed 7,853,395; and making an allowance of 58,000, which was the estimated population of Texas, New Mexico, and California, the population in 1846 might be estimated at about 7,450,000. But almost all Mexican statistics of population were believed to have been much too low, so that perhaps 8,000,000 is not an unreasonable figure for the population of Mexico (excluding Texas) in 1846.

large immigration had risen in 1846 to approximately 20,300,000.[1] This was more than two and one-half times the population of Mexico; but if the comparative increase since 1800 was taken into account, the astonishing rapidity of growth of the United States became more apparent. Mexico during that time had grown from perhaps 6,000,000 to 8,000,000, or approximately thirty-three per cent; but the United States had grown in the same period from 5,309,858 to about 20,300,000, or nearly three hundred per cent.

Significant as these figures were, they were less impressive than a comparison between the respective wealth and industry of the two countries. So far as statistics could reveal the difference, it could scarcely be exaggerated. Thus, in regard to shipping, the United States was then one of the first maritime powers of the world. Mexico, on the other hand, possessed no merchant marine, save a few petty coasting vessels whose tonnage was entirely insignificant. The movement of vessels from Mexican ports, so far as could be ascertained, was extremely small. For instance, in 1841 the whole foreign trade of Matamoros was carried on in vessels from the United States, 32 in all, the total movement of exports and imports from that port being about $900,000. In the same year there were 91 arrivals and departures from Tampico, of which 19 were British men-of-war and government packets; while from Vera Cruz, the principal port of the republic, for the six months ending July 1, 1842, there were but 271 arrivals and departures.[2] No records from the Pacific ports were published, but their foreign trade was practically non-existent. Against this may be placed the recorded movement of shipping in the ports of the United States. The tonnage of American vessels entering and clearing during 1845 was 4,089,463, and of foreign vessels 1,840,838; or, in all, close upon 6,000,000 tons.

In the entire absence of accurate Mexican statistics, the amount collected from import duties in the two countries gives some notion of the respective size of their foreign com-

[1] By the census of 1840 it was 17,069,453; in 1850, 23,191,876.
[2] Farnham's *Mexico*, 32.

merce. In Mexico the customs receipts for the year 1845 amounted to $5,814,048.69.[1] This was under a heavy tariff, which would average from fifty to sixty per cent of the value of the imports. Under the far more moderate American tariff the customs receipts for the year ending June 30, 1845, were $26,712,667.87. The total Mexican commerce, including both imports and exports, was believed to amount to perhaps $40,000,000 a year, while the total commerce of the United States was officially reported to be about $235,000,000.

In manufacturing, the advantage of the United States over Mexico was not less remarkable. There were, for instance, estimated to be in Mexico in the year 1843, fifty-three textile factories, with 131,280 spindles.[2] The corresponding figures in the United States at that time were from 1,250,000 to 1,500,000 spindles. Like discrepancies were shown in the estimates of agricultural products, even in respect to such crops as sugar and cotton.[3]

As a charge upon the commerce of the United States, there were federal expenditures to be met, which in 1845 amounted to less than $23,000,000, though the revenue amounted to nearly $30,000,000. The total national debt was much less than a year's income, being under $24,000,000. The total reported revenues of the Mexican government were not very different from those of the United States, being in 1845 a trifle over $24,000,000; but this by no means sufficed to meet the national expenses, for the interest upon the funded debt was left wholly unpaid, and other indebtedness was being constantly incurred. By the first of July, 1846, the exterior debt of Mexico amounted to over $55,000,000, or considerably more than twice the whole national debt of the United States; and the interior debt was probably near $100,000,000.[4]

[1] Romero, 145.

[2] Farnham, 30.

[3] Cotton exports from the United States for 1845 were valued at $51,739,643.—(Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for 1845, 605, 615.)

[4] J. M. L. Mora in 1835 estimated the total interior debt at $82,364,978; and it must have largely increased in the next ten years.—(Mora, *Obras Sueltas*, I, 425.)

As to means of transportation, they were no better in Mexico in 1846 than they had been in 1825; but in the United States about 5,000 miles of railway had already been put in operation, steam-boat facilities on the rivers and Great Lakes had largely increased, and traffic upon the canals was perhaps at its height. So important, indeed, had American methods of communication become that a serious French work in two large volumes, with an atlas, published in 1840, was wholly devoted to the history and description of traffic facilities in the United States.[1]

Not less incontestable was the superiority of the United States navy. The Mexican navy, consisting of a few ill-found and ill-manned vessels of small tonnage, was a negligible quantity. The American navy, on the other hand, with over thirty vessels actually at sea, had acquired a brilliant reputation for efficiency; and, what was still more vital, it had acquired in many seas such traditions of gallantry as sufficed to make it a formidable opponent to any adversary. The one apparent element of warlike superiority on the part of Mexico was the greater size of its army. On paper the regular Mexican troops far outnumbered the American, and whether this superiority in numbers could be offset by a difference in *personnel* and by the enlistment of volunteers was the only problem to which an answer could not well be given in advance.[2]

[1] Chevalier, *Histoire et Description des Voies de Communication aux Etats-Unis.*

[2] A part of this chapter has already been published as an article in the *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, vol. XVIII, pp. 275–294. I have to thank the editors for the permission to reproduce it here.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### PEACE OR WAR

The public aspect of the relations between the United States and Great Britain during the first year of Polk's administration certainly bore a very warlike appearance. It was in July, 1845, that the British minister in Washington had peremptorily declined the proposal to settle the Oregon question by extending the line of 49° north latitude from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and had left it to the American government to make some other proposal, "more consistent," as he pleasantly put it, "with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectations of the British government."

The issues of peace or war thus seemed to be left solely in the hands of the President and his Secretary of State, and the timid and irresolute spirit of Buchanan was greatly vexed in dealing with a subject so full of the most dreadful possibilities. Never was the sobering action of official responsibility more clearly exhibited. He who had so courageously declaimed as a senator against the pretensions of Great Britain was now, as Secretary of State, filled with painful forebodings at the possibility of war.

But if the Secretary of State was terrified at the spectre he had helped to raise, the President stood firm against any policy of concession, and "communicated to the several members of the cabinet," as he himself has related, "the settled decision to which his mind had come."[1] Mr. Buchanan's reply to Pakenham, he said, should assert the American claim to the whole of the Oregon territory, from

[1] Polk's *Diary*, Aug. 26, 1845, I, 2. It was the importance of this conversation in the cabinet that suggested to the President the keeping of a diary, which he did, from that day on.

California to Alaska, and should distinctly state that the proposal to compromise on the line of 49° had been made, first, in deference to what had been formerly done by the agents of the United States, and, second, from an anxious desire to preserve peace. This proposal had been rejected in language, to say the least of it, scarcely courteous or respectful, and it was now withdrawn by the United States, and was no longer to be considered as pending for the consideration of the British government.

Buchanan, according to Polk, was for saying in the reply that the United States would deliberately consider any further proposition the British minister might submit; but to this Polk would not consent. The inevitable inference, he said, from such an invitation would be that the administration was prepared to accept less favorable terms than those which it had already proposed.

"Any proposition less favourable than 49° the President said he would promptly reject. Why then invite a proposition which cannot for a moment be entertained. Let our proposition be absolutely withdrawn & then let the Brittish Minister take his own course. If he chooses to close the negotiation he can do so. If he chooses to make a proposition he can as well do it without our invitation as with it. Let him take the one course or the other, the U. States will stand in the right in the eyes of the whole civilized world, and if war was the consequence England would be in the wrong. The President further remarked that he had reflected much on this subject; that it had occupied his thoughts more than any and all others during his administration, and that though he had given his assent to the proposition to compromise at 49°, he must say he did not regret that it had been rejected by the Brittish Minister."

Buchanan, in reply, urged that if the President's views were carried out it would lead to war, and that the people would not be willing to support war for such a cause. He also made allusion to the difficulties with Mexico,

"and thought his reply to Mr. Pakenham ought to be postponed until we could know whether we would have actual war with that country or not. The President said he saw no necessary connection between the two questions; that the settlement of the one was not

dependent on the other; that we should do our duty towards both Mexico and Great Brittain and firmly maintain our rights, & leave the rest to God and the country. Mr. Buchanan said he thought God would not have much to do in justifying us in a war for the country North of 49°."

To this very obviously just remark of Buchanan's the President seems to have had no adequate repartee, and the conversation, after a further effort by Buchanan to secure a month's delay, ended with a peremptory direction from the President to have a draft of the reply to Pakenham ready the next morning for consideration by the cabinet.[1] Next morning the draft of the note to Pakenham was read, and Buchanan was soothed by the unanimous opinion of all present that it was "an able and admirable paper." He still urged delay, but was overruled, and with some verbal modifications it was copied, signed, and delivered at the British legation. It contained another long exposition of the American case, and stated that, by the President's instructions, the proposition of settlement made to the British government was withdrawn, although the President still cherished the hope that this long-pending controversy might yet be adjusted in such a manner as not to disturb the peace between the two nations.[2]

Pakenham, of course, transmitted all the correspondence to the Foreign Office, and, commenting on the last note, said he believed Buchanan was intent mainly on wringing humiliating concessions from Great Britain, and was not sincerely anxious to end the dispute by an honorable compromise.[3] Aberdeen, however, took a much more serious view of the matter. The expression of a diplomatic hope at the close of the last American note was a pretty distinct threat, and therefore, about the first of October, very soon after receiving Pakenham's despatch just mentioned, when Aberdeen had an interview with the American minister in London, he expressed his regret that Pakenham had, on his

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 2-6.

[2] Buchanan to Pakenham, Aug. 30, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 177-200.

[3] Pakenham to Aberdeen, Sept. 13, 1845; *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XVI, 298.

own responsibility, rejected the American offer of compromise, and intimated the willingness of the British government to agree to a modified proposal.[1]

As soon as this expression of Aberdeen's views was received, Buchanan asked in a cabinet meeting what ought to be done about it. The President was very positive that no further proposals should be made to the British government. If they had any further proposition to make it could be considered, and so Pakenham should be told if he called. Buchanan insisted that if the negotiation stopped where it was it would inevitably lead to war; to which Polk replied that he was well satisfied with the ground he occupied on this subject, and that he would take a strong position in his message to Congress.[2]

Pakenham was thus, very obviously, left in a difficult position. His conduct had been disapproved by his own government, and he did not know how to make a new proposition, now that that made by the United States had been withdrawn. Buchanan was inclined to help him out of the difficulty, but Polk resolutely insisted that the British government must make the first move. For several days Buchanan tried to persuade the President to agree either to renew the former proposition or to make a new one; but Polk still remained firm, and said that the British minister should be left to take his own course, and that not even a hint must be given as to what the decision would be upon any proposition he might make.[3]

During the remainder of October and the whole of November the Oregon negotiation remained dormant, Pakenham awaiting further instructions from his government, then

[1] McLane to Buchanan, Oct. 8, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.* And see Polk's *Diary*, I, 62.

[2] *Ibid.*, 63.

[3] *Ibid.*, 75, 82. Pakenham on October 27 left a note with Buchanan, on the understanding that he might be permitted to treat it as unofficial and subsequently withdraw it. A reply was prepared, as the result of two cabinet discussions; but when the President learned that Pakenham reserved the right to withdraw his note he directed Buchanan not to deliver the reply unless Pakenham elected to have the note considered official. Buchanan, according to Polk's diary, was much annoyed at the course prescribed for him, but obeyed. See also Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 285.

sorely troubled over the Irish famine and the incipient discussions upon the repeal of the corn laws, and the American government waiting for the British to make the next move. On the second of December Congress met and the President sent in his first annual message.

He began by recalling the joint resolution of Congress for annexing Texas to the United States, related briefly the steps taken to carry it into effect, urged prompt action to extend the revenue laws and judicial system of the Union over the new state, and sounded a loud note of rejoicing:

"If we consider the extent of territory involved in the annexation—its prospective influence on America—the means by which it has been accomplished, springing purely from the choice of the people themselves to share the blessings of our Union—the history of the world may be challenged to furnish a parallel."

From Texas the President turned to Mexico. He informed Congress of Almonte's protest against the annexation of Texas, and the consequent rupture of diplomatic relations. Since that time, until recently, Mexico had occupied an attitude of hostility toward the United States, and had been marshalling and organising armies, issuing proclamations, and avowing an intention to make war. Under these circumstances, and in view of a threatened invasion, he had considered it his duty to protect and defend Texas the moment that country accepted the terms of annexation offered by the United States. He had therefore ordered a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico, and stationed a strong military force on the western frontier of Texas, between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The naval and military commanders had orders to commit no act of hostility against Mexico unless she declared war or was herself the aggressor, and the result had been that Mexico had made no aggressive movement, and the peace of the two republics had not been disturbed.

Mexico, the President continued, could not justly complain of the annexation of Texas, a country which had maintained independence by her arms for more than nine years, and

had been recognized as an independent state by the United States and the principal powers of Europe. But other serious causes of misunderstanding continued to exist, "growing out of unredressed injuries inflicted by the Mexican authorities and people on the persons and property of citizens of the United States, through a long series of years." Mexico had admitted these injuries, but had neglected and refused to redress them. Some of these claims had been submitted to arbitration, and had resulted in awards amounting to over two million dollars, of which only three-twentieths had been paid. Claims left undecided by the joint commission, amounting to more than three million dollars, together with other claims for spoliations upon the property of our citizens, remained wholly unsettled, although the United States was ready to submit them to arbitration. Such a continued and unprovoked series of wrongs could never have been tolerated had they been committed by one of the principal nations of Europe.

The executive, however, as the message proceeded to point out, had no power, without the authority of Congress, to enforce adequate remedies for the injuries suffered, nor could the President do more than prepare to repel threatened aggression. After the army and navy had remained on the frontier and coasts of Mexico for many weeks, without any hostile movement on her part, though her menaces were continued, he had deemed it important to put an end, if possible, to this state of things. He had therefore caused inquiries to be made as to what the designs of the Mexican government were, "whether it was their intention to declare war, or invade Texas, or whether they were disposed to adjust and settle, in an amicable manner, the pending differences between the two countries." He had received, on the ninth of November, an official answer to the effect that the Mexican government consented to renew diplomatic negotiations, and he had therefore, on the following day, appointed a distinguished citizen of Louisiana as minister to Mexico. It was expected that the negotiation would be brought to a close before the termination of the session of

Congress, and until the result was known, the President would forbear recommending "such ulterior measures of redress for the wrongs and injuries we have so long borne, as it would have been proper to make had no such negotiation been instituted."

The subject of the Oregon dispute was next taken up. The President, after reciting the history of the three attempts made under the administrations of Monroe and Adams to settle the question by compromise, and the renewal in 1843 by the United States of the offer to adjust the controversy by taking the forty-ninth parallel of latitude, said that although he entertained the settled conviction that the British pretensions of title could not be maintained to any portion of the Oregon territory, yet, in deference to what had been done by his predecessors and their proposals of compromise, he had deemed it to be his duty not to break off abruptly the pending negotiation, and had therefore made one more effort to settle the controversy in a spirit of moderation. The proposition made by the United States was rejected by the British plenipotentiary, who, without submitting any other proposition, had suffered the negotiation on his part to drop. For this reason the proposition of a compromise had been withdrawn and the American title to the whole Oregon territory asserted. "The civilized world," he continued, "will see in these proceedings a spirit of liberal concession on the part of the United States; and this government will be relieved from all responsibility which may follow the failure to settle the controversy." The President then recommended that notice should be given to terminate the joint occupation under the treaty of 1827, and that legislation should be adopted at once, extending civil and criminal jurisdiction over American citizens in Oregon. Whether any other measures should be adopted for the security of American rights, he left to the wisdom of Congress to determine.

He followed up this defiant statement by an assertion of his adherence to the Monroe doctrine, which, he said, forbade the European powers from interfering with the annexa-

tion to the United States of any independent state upon this continent—a remark which did not seem to have much relevance to the question of Oregon, and could hardly have had any to Texas, as annexation to the United States was an accomplished fact. What he was really thinking about was California.[1]

At this same time events were happening in England which were of serious consequence in American affairs. On the day that the President's message was sent to the Congress in Washington Sir Robert Peel, at a cabinet meeting in London, was proposing to his colleagues a reduction and ultimate removal of the highly protective British duties on imported grain—a measure which, in its later form of the practical abolition of all duties, was generally known as the repeal of the corn laws.[2] Up to this time the Conservative party had stood for a policy of protection to that particular form of home industry in which almost all the members of the House of Lords and a large proportion of the House of Commons were personally interested, namely, agriculture; and it is therefore not surprising that ministers were sharply divided upon the question of adopting a policy which had previously been advocated only by their strongest political opponents.

The discussions in the British cabinet continued until Friday, the fifth of December, when Peel went to the Queen and laid his resignation before her, following it up by a letter on the following Monday, in which he explained his inability to carry on the government with a divided following. The Whigs, being in a minority in Parliament, could hardly have been expected, under ordinary circumstances, to undertake the task; but Peel offered to support a Whig government if formed by Lord John Russell, so far at least as related to the two questions of repealing the corn laws and of increasing the naval and military expenditures, in view of the heavy demands made upon the army of the country for colonial service, of our relations with the United States, and of the bearing which steam-navigation

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 71. [2] See memorandum in Peel's *Memoirs*, II, 214.

may have upon maritime warfare and the defence of the country." [1]

The position in which the Whigs were now placed was evidently difficult; but nevertheless, after consultation with leading members of his party, Russell on the eighteenth of December informed the Queen that he was ready to undertake the formation of a government. Two days later, however, he informed her that his ability to form a government had depended upon his securing the zealous aid of all the members of his party, and upon his ability to get them to act in concert; that in one instance he had been unable to obtain this concert; and that he "must now consider that task as hopeless which has been from the beginning hazardous." [2]

The "one instance" which had led to this sudden reversal of the decision of the Whigs to take office was the refusal of Lord Grey (long known in the House of Commons as Lord Howick), whose assistance was regarded as essential, to join the proposed government. According to that very well-informed person, Mr. Charles Greville, what had happened was this: Russell—

> "had offered Howick the Colonies. Howick accepted, but begged to know the other arrangements, and particularly who was to have the Foreign Office. He told him 'Palmerston.' Then said Howick, 'I will not be in the Cabinet.' He argued with him, told him all the reasons for this arrangement, said everything he could think of, but all in vain. So they parted." [3]

Next day Russell told the story to the Queen, and read her a long letter from Lord Grey, in which the latter explained his motives, and ended by saying that he was not answerable for the failure to form an administration.[4] The worst of it was that the Queen herself had already spoken to Russell about Palmerston, and had expressed alarm at the

[1] Sir R. Peel to the Queen, Dec. 8, 1845; *ibid.*, 223-226.
[2] Lord J. Russell to the Queen, Dec. 20, 1845; *ibid.*, 243-245.
[3] Greville, *Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria*, II, 64.
[4] Memorandum by Prince Albert, Dec. 20, 1845, in *Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 71.

idea of his returning to the Foreign Office. The same feeling was undoubtedly entertained in the city; but when Russell hinted this to Palmerston, and asked if he would not accept another office, he positively refused to enter the government except as the head of the Foreign Office.[1]

Upon this the Queen sent again for Peel, and asked him to withdraw his resignation, which he at once agreed to. The cabinet, almost without exception, stood by him, and they introduced and carried the repeal of the corn laws with the aid of the Whigs, after a most bitter contest in Parliament between the two wings of the Tory party. They were not turned out of office until nearly six months later.[2]

These events, which were not fully understood until many years afterward, were obviously of the gravest import to the United States. If Lord Palmerston had become Foreign Secretary at the beginning of the year 1846, it is quite certain that his manners and methods would have added serious obstacles to a settlement of the Oregon question. Under the circumstances of the times, it would have been easy for him to irritate the United States into declaring war, and it would also have been in his power to afford efficient British support to Mexico. Precisely what he would have done is, of course, the idlest conjecture, but it may at least be said, with some confidence, that if Palmerston had been in the Foreign Office during the first six months of the year (which Lord Grey's firmness alone prevented) the map of North America would have been very different from what it is to-day.

However, as soon as it was settled that Peel was to remain

[1] *Ibid.*, 70; Greville, 56, 64. In the *Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 79–82, is printed a letter from Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne (which was sent to the Queen) in which the former gives his version of what was said to him by Russell, and defends his course.

[2] It was in this contest that Disraeli first came into real prominence. His famous simile of Peel's coming upon the Whigs while they were bathing and running off with their clothes was a taking picture of the course of the government. The only member of Peel's cabinet who refused to go on after Lord John Russell's notification that he could not form a government, was Lord Stanley (afterward known as Lord Derby). Lord Wharncliffe, one of the cabinet, died suddenly just at this time. Their places were taken by Lord Dalhousie and Mr. Gladstone, who was also near the beginning of his great career.

in office, Aberdeen again took up the Oregon negotiation. "His most earnest desire," Greville wrote early in December, "is to get over the Oregon affair as well as he can, and he knows that nothing will have so great an effect in America, nothing tend so materially to the prevalence of pacific counsels, as an announcement that the corn laws are going to be repealed."[1] Just before Christmas Aberdeen talked freely with Greville about Oregon. He "treated the President's message with great indifference, and said he was certain to settle the question in the course of the year, and confident there was no disposition to go to war in America."[2]

Whatever might have been the disposition in America, it was quite certain that there was no desire for war in Peel's cabinet. The distress in Ireland, and to some extent also in England, were powerful arguments against it, for the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company were not to be put in the scale against those of a starving people. Oregon, in itself, was an object of very trivial interest to most Englishmen, and they certainly would have been very unwilling to fight for it if that alternative could by any reasonable means be avoided. The first move of the British government was, therefore, to propose once more an arbitration of "an equitable division" of the territory; and when that was again refused, Pakenham renewed the offer of arbitration, but proposed to include the question of title. This offer the United States also declined, after long discussions in the cabinet as to the form of the reply, all the members of the cabinet agreeing, however, that the offer to arbitrate should be rejected.[3]

So far as the two executives were concerned matters there rested, but Congress was busy through the winter taking a

[1] Greville, II, 48.

[2] *Ibid.*, 73.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, 207. The first of these proposals to arbitrate was made on Dec. 27, 1845, and declined Jan. 3, 1846; the second was made Jan. 16 and declined Feb. 4, 1846.—(Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 355, 357, 370, 377.) When Pakenham first called to offer arbitration, he urged Buchanan to renew the offer of 49° north; and when told the President would not retrace his steps or renew his offer, Pakenham presented the arbitration plan. Buchanan told him the Senate would not confirm a treaty of arbitration, even if the President agreed to it. Pakenham then "remarked that the affair might remain just where it was, and the British Government would not disturb it. He did not

hand in the affair. The President in his annual message had recommended that notice be given to terminate the agreement for joint occupation, and early in the session a resolution was reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House directing the President to give the required twelve months' notice. The opportunity for long and vehement talk was, of course, made the most of, and the question was debated through the month of January and half of February; but the resolution was finally passed by a vote of 163 to 54 on February 9, 1846.

In the Senate there were even longer and more excited debates, which developed the most marked differences of opinion as to the policy to be pursued. Calhoun, who had again been sent by his state to the Senate, was particularly anxious about the result. He had expressed himself in the autumn as thinking that the true policy of the United States was to remain quiet, to do nothing to excite attention, and leave time to operate. He considered Polk's mention of Oregon in his inaugural address "a profound blunder," and thought that nothing could be more imprudent or more improper than his remarks, which had left the subject in the worst possible condition. He believed that the "indisposition of England to go to war" was shared by all the Atlantic states, and he suspected that the members of the administration were also opposed to war "if they could get out of the scrape."[1] Immediately after his arrival in Washington Calhoun had called on the President and expressed his strong desire for delay, as he feared the result of hasty action by Congress and the debates which would arise. But Polk insisted on the measures he had recommended in his message. To a supporter of Calhoun's he said—

"that the only way to treat John Bull was to look him straight in the eye; that I considered a bold & firm course on our part the pacific

entertain serious apprehensions of War. . . . He said the British Government would be glad to get clear of the question on almost any terms; that they did not care if the arbitrator should award the whole territory to us. They would yield it without a murmur."—(Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 352.)

[1] *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1900, II, 661, 671, 673.

one; that if Congress faultered or hesitated in their course, John Bull would immediately become arrogant and more grasping in his demands; & that such had been the history of the Brittish Nation in all their contests with other Powers for the last two hundred years." [1]

As the months rolled by, and Congress consumed the time in talk, Polk became more and more anxious. He saw senator after senator and urged the passage of the resolution directing that notice be given to terminate the joint occupancy of Oregon, but he firmly declined to say what he would do after that, beyond a general assurance that if Great Britain should make a not unreasonable offer he would probably submit it to the Senate for their advice. At last, however, the flood of eloquence in the Senate abated, and the resolution for giving notice was passed by a vote of 40 to 14 on April 16, 1846, in a somewhat different form from that adopted by the House.[2] The President was not much pleased with either form of resolution; but he told his visitors that while he was content with the resolution which had passed the House, yet to avoid the risk of a failure to pass anything he advised acceptance of the Senate's amendment. He believed, correctly as the result proved, that the British government would take no step as long as the question of notice was being debated in Congress, that they "would calculate on our divisions," and that they would not regard as unfriendly a notice to terminate the joint occupancy agreement.

A week passed, in which the form of the resolution was still under discussion, but at length, on April 23, 1846, on the report of a committee of conference, both houses voted in favor of giving the notice—the Senate by 42 to 10, the House by 142 to 46.

The resolution, after reciting the conventions of October, 1818, and August, 1827, ran as follows:

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 155.

[2] Both senators from Maine, Illinois, and Indiana voted in the negative, and one senator each from New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Florida, Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri. All these were Democrats. The South, it will be observed, was all but unanimous for the notice.

"Whereas it has now become desirable that the respective claims of the United States and Great Britain should be definitely settled, and that said territory may no longer than need be remain subject to the evil consequences of the divided allegiance of its American and British population, and of the confusion and conflict of national jurisdictions, dangerous to the cherished peace and good understanding of the two countries:

"With a view, therefore, that steps be taken for the abrogation of the said Convention of the 6th of August, 1827, in the mode prescribed in its second article, and that the attention of the governments of the two countries may be the more earnestly directed to the adoption of all proper measures for a speedy and amicable adjustment of the differences and disputes in regard to the said territory:

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorized, at his discretion, to give to the government of Great Britain the notice required by the second article of the said Convention of the 6th of August, 1827, for the abrogation of the same."[1]

By the time this joint resolution was passed Mexican affairs were approaching a crisis, much to the annoyance of Polk and his cabinet. They had despatched Slidell with light hearts, in the belief that the purchase of California was within easy reach; and the news that Mexico might not be willing, after all, to discuss terms of peace was naturally unwelcome.

On Monday, the twelfth of January, 1846, the first despatch from Slidell was received, giving an account of his failure to be received by Mexico, and the next morning it was read and considered by the cabinet. There seems to have been no dissent or hesitation as to the course to be pursued. General Taylor was ordered to march his army from Corpus Christi to the banks of the Rio Grande, Commodore Conner was ordered to take his fleet back again to Vera Cruz, and Slidell's conduct was expressly approved. "The course you have determined to pursue," Slidell was told, "is the proper one. . . . The President, in anticipation of the final refusal of the Mexican government to receive you, has ordered the army of Texas to advance and take position on the left bank of the Rio Grande; and has

[1] U. S. Stat. at Large, IX, 109.

directed that a strong fleet be assembled in the gulf of Mexico. He will thus be prepared to act with vigor and promptitude, the moment that Congress shall give him the authority."[1] All this seemed to commit the administration to nothing. The appearance of an American army opposite Matamoros and the reappearance of an American fleet off Vera Cruz might serve as a strong hint to Mexican politicians; but no message was sent to the American Congress, nor was any public announcement made of the naval and military orders.

Taylor, at Corpus Christi, received his orders early in February, and began making deliberate preparation for the advance from the Nueces to the Rio Grande; while at the same time President Polk, at Washington, was occupied in conferences which were destined to exercise the greatest influence upon the course of the American government.

On Friday, the thirteenth of February, the President was called on by a certain Colonel Atocha, a Spaniard by birth, who had lived for a time in New Orleans, and had there been naturalised as an American citizen. He had subsequently lived for some years in Mexico, where he had been an obscure hanger-on of Santa Anna's. After Santa Anna's imprisonment, early in 1845, he had been ordered out of Mexico by Herrera's administration. He had already, in June, 1845, called at the White House to urge his claim for damages as an American citizen, but when he called again, in February, 1846, he stated that he had recently come from Havana, where he had seen Santa Anna; and in a long and confidential interview he undertook to put the President in possession of the views of that ambitious exile.

"He represented," Polk noted in his diary, "that Santa Anna was in constant communication with his friends in Mexico, and received by every vessel that left Vera Cruz hundreds of letters. He intimated that the recent Revolution headed by Paredes met Santa Anna's sanction, and that Santa Anna might soon be in power again in Mexico. He said that Santa Anna was in favor of a treaty with the U. S., and that in adjusting a boundary between the two countries the Del Norte

[1] Buchanan to Slidell, Jan. 20, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 53.

should be the Western Texas line, and the Colorado of the West down through the Bay of San Francisco to the Sea should be the Mexican line on the North, and that Mexico should cede all East and North of these natural boundaries for a pecuniary consideration and mentioned thirty millions of Dollars as the sum. This sum he said Santa Anna believed would pay the most pressing debts of Mexico, support the army until the condition of the finances could be improved, and enable the Government to be placed on a permanent footing. Col. Atocha said that Santa Anna was surprised that the U. S. Naval force had been withdrawn from Vera Cruz last fall, and that Gen'l Taylor's army was kept at Corpus Christi instead of being stationed on the Del Norte; and that the U. S. would never be able to treat with Mexico, without the presence of an imposing force by land and sea, and this, Col. Atocha added, was his own opinion. Col. Atocha did not say that he was sent by Santa Anna to hold this conversation with me; but I think it probable he was so." [1]

On the following Monday Colonel Atocha called again on the President, and repeated his suggestions as to a treaty. The President made the commonplace remark that if the government of Mexico had any proposition to make, such as Santa Anna suggested, it would be considered when made; but the reply was obvious to any one familiar with Mexican affairs.

"Col. Atocha said no Government or administration in Mexico dared to make such a proposition, for if they did so there would be another revolution by which they would be overthrown. He said they must appear to be forced to agree to such a proposition. He went on to give his own opinion and, as he said, that of Gen'l Santa Anna, that the U. States should take strong measures before any settlement could be effected. He said our army should be marched at once from Corpus Christi to the Del Norte, and a strong Naval force assembled at Vera Cruz, that Mr. Slidell, the U. S. Minister, should withdraw from Jalappa, and go on board one of our ships of War at Vera Cruz, and in that position should demand the payment of the amount due our citizens; that it was well known the Mexican Government was unable to pay in money, and that when they saw a strong force ready to strike on their coasts and border, they would, he had no doubt, feel their danger and agree to the boundary suggested. He said that

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 224. Atocha, after years of effort, succeeded in getting Congress to take up his claims, and ultimately, in 1873, his estate recovered over two hundred thousand dollars. See *Atocha v. U. S.*, 8 Court of Claims Rep., 427.

Paredes, Almonte, & Gen'l Santa Anna were all willing for such an arrangement, but that they dare not make it until it was made apparent to the Archbishop of Mexico & the people generally that it was necessary to save their country from a war with the U. States."[1]

The archbishop, according to Santa Anna's messenger, could easily be persuaded, if he were assured that the debt due from the government to the church would be paid out of the money coming from the United States; and Santa Anna and Paredes wanted money for the army, but would need it at once. "With half a million in hand they could make the treaty and sustain themselves for a few months, and until the balance was paid."

Santa Anna, or Atocha in his name, had touched, with a perfectly unerring finger, the real purposes and ambitions of the listening President; and he had delicately flattered him by recommending a military policy which Polk had already secretly adopted. Advice so adroitly given was certain to be followed, though the President gave Atocha no message to be carried back to Havana.

"Col. Atocha," he noted, "is a person to whom I would not give my confidence. He is evidently a man of talents and education, but his whole manner & conversation impressed me with the belief that he was not reliable, and that he would betray any confidence reposed in him, when it was his interest to do so."

And so Santa Anna's messenger went back without the very slightest intimation as to what the President would do.

Santa Anna's real motive in opening communications with the American government is abundantly clear. He must have hoped to repeat his political successes at the time of the Spanish invasion of 1829 and the French attack on Vera Cruz in 1838, and he must have believed that, in case a genuine threat of war were made by the United States, the people of Mexico would infallibly turn to the hero of Tampico and Vera Cruz. But whether he would or could, in that event, make peace on the terms he had caused to be suggested to the President of the United States was quite

[1] *Ibid.*, 228.

another matter, about which Santa Anna at that time probably felt little concern.

At cabinet meetings held on the fourteenth and seventeenth of February President Polk related his conversations with Atocha. On the first occasion he suggested sending a confidential agent to confer with Santa Anna, but the proposal met with little favor and was dropped. At the second meeting he informed his cabinet that he thought it would be necessary to take strong measures with Mexico. He proposed to instruct Slidell to demand an early decision from Mexico, first, as to receiving him, and, second, if he was received, then whether they would pay the amounts due to American claimants without further delay. If the Mexican government refused to do both, he was to be directed to go aboard one of the American naval vessels off Vera Cruz and await further instructions. The President, in that event, would send "a strong message to Congress" asking for authority "to take redress into our own hands by aggressive measures"; or, in other words, for authority to declare war.

To this echo of Atocha's talk Buchanan objected. He thought that Slidell, if he left Mexico, ought to come back to the United States; and although he undertook, with rather an ill-grace, to prepare instructions to Slidell embodying the President's views, the latter made up his mind that he would have to draft them himself. Finally, after two days' reflection, the President decided to do nothing, "in the expectation that we must very soon receive further information from Mr. Slidell," and for a month nothing was done in this direction.[1]

On the ninth of March Slidell's despatches from Jalapa were received, in which he gave an account of the establishment of the Paredes government, but stated that he was still waiting before making a new demand to be received.[2] "The character of a despatch to be transmitted to him was agreed upon" at a cabinet meeting held on the tenth of

[1] *Ibid.*, 233–238.

[2] Slidell to Buchanan, Feb. 6 and 17, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 56, 61.

March,[1] and he was directed not to leave Mexico until a new demand to be received as minister had been made and rejected, in which event he might, in his discretion, either return to the United States or remain in Mexico to watch the progress of events.[2] And thus Buchanan's dilatory policy prevailed.

For weeks the same state of uncertainty and inaction continued. The news that the Mexican government had again refused to receive Slidell, and that he had determined to come home, reached Washington on the seventh of April, and the cabinet agreed that the President should send a message to Congress recommending war-like measures.[3] But a few days later, after consulting some of the members of Congress, Polk "determined to make no communication to Congress on the subject until the facts should be certainly ascertained, that Mr. Slidell had received his passports and had left Mexico." When the cabinet met again it was unanimously agreed to delay still longer and to wait until Slidell had returned to the United States; and then, a little later, it was agreed that it would be "prudent to wait the arrival of the next Steamer from England."[4] On the twenty-fifth of April, Congress having at last acted on the proposal to give notice to Great Britain in regard to Oregon, the members of the cabinet all concurred in the decision that a message in reference to Mexico should be sent in "next week."[5] Slidell returned to the United States, he came to Washington, he saw the President, and he urged that there was but one course to follow, "and that was to take the redress of the wrongs and injuries which we had so long borne from Mexico into our own hands, and to act with promptness and energy"; but all the President told him in reply was that "it was only a matter of time" when a message would be sent to Congress on the subject.[6]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 282.

[2] Buchanan to Slidell, March 12, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 64. On the day of the date of this instruction Slidell's new demand to be received was rejected by the Mexican government; *ibid.*, 67.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, I, 319. [4] *Ibid.*, 327, 343. [5] *Ibid.*, 354.

[6] May 8, 1846; *ibid.*, 382.

The reason for this hesitation was never mentioned, but it is obvious enough. The administration were not anxious to go to war with Mexico, though they were willing to do so if necessary—especially since they considered the Oregon question as good as settled—but they were afraid of Congress and the country. Those whom Polk consulted, notably Calhoun and Benton, were desirous of peace, and it is quite probable that at the time of Slidell's return neither of the houses of Congress would have voted for a declaration of war.

While the cabinet was thus puzzling over the Mexican situation the question of Oregon was being finally disposed of. The British government, as soon as it received the official notice of the termination of the joint occupancy pursuant to the resolution of April 23, was swift to act, for reasons which were thus stated by Lord Aberdeen himself in the House of Lords:

"The state of the negotiations," he said, "was this—the President had sent his message to the Senate with a direct refusal of our repeated proposals to submit the whole question to arbitration.[1] That being the case, my Lords, I felt that nothing could be done at that moment till the Senate and House of Representatives should have taken some steps in consequence of that Message. I waited, therefore, the result of that communication so made by the President. When I saw that the Senate and House of Representatives had adopted Resolutions of such a conciliatory and friendly description I did not delay a moment, putting aside all ideas of diplomatic etiquette which might have led me to expect that some other steps would be taken on the other side; but, without waiting a moment, I prepared the draught of a convention, which was sent by the packet of the eighteenth of May to Mr. Pakenham, to be proposed for the acceptance of the United States' Government."[2]

The boundary which Aberdeen now proposed was the line of 49° north, as far as the Gulf of Georgia, and then south and west through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, so as to leave to Great Britain the whole of Vancouver's Island. This solution

[1] Message of Feb. 7, 1846, to the House of Representatives transmitting diplomatic correspondence.

[2] Hansard, 3 ser., LXXXVII, 1038.

had been repeatedly talked over since it was first suggested by Everett to Aberdeen, more than two years before.[1] Both the President and the British minister in Washington had discussed it with members of the Senate, and McLane had reported that he believed the British government would make the offer if there was a likelihood of its being accepted. Buchanan, in an official letter of February 26, 1846, had replied that, if made, the President would submit the proposal to the Senate, "though with reluctance"; but it was well understood that if submitted to that body it would be approved. "From all I can learn," wrote Buchanan privately to McLane, "there is not the least doubt that either of the two propositions specified in my despatch would receive the previous sanction of a constitutional majority."[2]

On June 6, 1846, Pakenham presented the draft treaty which had been sent him from the Foreign Office, and four days later the President, after some singular objections from Buchanan,[3] sent the proposal to the Senate, and requested their advice as to the action which it might be proper for him to take in reference to it. In doing so he stated in his message that he was following a precedent set by General Washington, which seemed eminently wise, "though rarely resorted to in later times." The Senate was a branch of the treaty-making power, and also a branch of the war-making power, and it was thought that a decision on the proposals of the British government, without a definite knowledge of the views of the Senate, might render the question much more complicated and difficult of adjustment. Should the Senate by a two-thirds vote advise the acceptance of the proposition, the President would conform his action to their advice; but should that body decline to give such advice, he should consider it his duty to reject the offer. At the same time he added that his opinions on the

[1] Everett to Upshur, Feb. 22, 1844; *State Dept. MSS.* "I then repeated what I had said on a former occasion, about the cession on our part of the southern end of Quadra and Vancouver's Island and I expressed the hope that if an offer was made to that effect by the Government of the United States, that Mr. Pakenham would be authorized to accept it."

[2] Buchanan to McLane, Feb. 26, 1846; Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 377, 385.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, I, 451–462.

Oregon question, as contained in his annual message of December 2, 1845, remained unchanged.

Two days later the Senate by a vote of 37 to 12 advised the acceptance of the British offer, and on June 15, 1846, the treaty was signed, and at once formally ratified by the Senate, and ratifications were exchanged at London a month later.

The announcement of the result was the last act of Peel's ministry, and was received with a feeling of relief by all parties in England. "The settlement of the Oregon question has given us the greatest satisfaction," wrote the Queen.[1] Palmerston, in the House of Commons, and Lansdowne, in the House of Lords, representing the new ministry, expressed their pleasure, and there was no dissent.[2]

But in fact the result was a great personal triumph for Polk's skill in negotiation. He had accurately judged the temper of the British government and the temper of the American Congress. Against the advice of his timid and irresolute Secretary of State, he had insisted that the proposals for settlement must come from the British government. The British government had not dared to do less than meet the substance of the American demands, and the Senate had not dared to take the responsibility which the President put upon it of choosing between a compromise and war. The treaty not only settled the question of Oregon, but it also finally settled the question whether foreign nations would interfere between the United States and Mexico. The decision of the British government, said Peel, was not influenced at all by the dispute between those countries.[3] But the signature of the Oregon treaty was notice that Great Britain was willing to give the United States a free hand in Mexico, including California; and if Great

[1] The Queen to Sir R. Peel; *Queen Victoria's Letters*, II, 100.

[2] Hansard, 3 ser., LXXXVII, 1057, 1222. The favorable result was attributed by Lord Aberdeen very largely to the friendly and conciliatory course adopted by Mr. McLane, the American minister in London. "I am well assured," he remarked, "that there is no person in this House, or in this country, who more cordially participates in the feeling of satisfaction which it is fitted to produce than Mr. McLane."—(*Ibid.*, 1039.)

[3] *Ibid.*, 1053.

Britain would not interfere, it was certain that no other country in Europe would venture to take part in the coming contest.

The President had run serious risks for a great object, but the result had fully justified his boldness. And his boldness was all the more conspicuous because, even before the British proposal was made, hostilities with Mexico had actually begun.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### PALO ALTO AND RESACA DE LA PALMA

On the fourth of February, 1846, General Zachary Taylor received the order from the Secretary of War, dated three weeks earlier, which directed him to march with the force under his command from Corpus Christi, where he was then encamped, and to occupy a position on the east bank of the Rio Grande "as soon as it can conveniently be done with reference to the season and the routes by which your movements must be made." [1]

It was evidently not the intention to hurry Taylor, nor would it have been easy for him to move at once. The army was necessarily supplied by sea, and a movement to the Rio Grande involved the complete abandonment of the post at Corpus Christi and the establishment of a new base near the mouth of the Rio Grande. "The occupation of Point Isabel or Brazos Santiago as a depot," Taylor reported, "will be indispensable. That point, and a position on or near the river opposite Matamoros will I think answer all present purposes." [2]

The breaking up of the camp he had occupied for six months, the removal of the stores and hospital, the organization of transport, and the reconnoissance of routes for the march all required time; and it was not until the eighth of March, 1846, that the cavalry, with one battery of light artillery, started from Corpus Christi. The roads were reported to be in good order, the weather fine, and the troops in excellent condition for service.[3] On the two following days the brigades of infantry marched out "in tip-top health

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Jan. 13, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 90.
[2] Taylor to Marcy, Feb. 4, 1846; *ibid.*, 116.
[3] Same to same, March 8, 1846; *ibid.*, 118.

and spirits," and on the twenty-fourth of March the cavalry reached Point Isabel, where the transports and their naval escort were just arriving. The greater part of the infantry encamped that evening at Palo Alto (tall timber), a place between Point Isabel and Matamoros, distant some nine miles in a straight line from the latter.[1]

The coast of Texas is fringed by a succession of islands, with shallow bays between them and the main-land; and Point Isabel, or Fronton de Santa Isabel, as it was called by the Mexicans, projects on such a bay, forming a bluff directly opposite an entrance from the sea, which went by the name of Brazos de Santiago. Facing this entrance, a person standing on the bluff could see to his left the long sandy island of Padre Vallin stretching away interminably, while on the right was the smaller island of Santiago. South of Santiago was the Boca Chica, a smaller entrance to the bay. On the south side of the Boca Chica a sand-spit stretched some three miles to the mouth of the Rio Grande. The shallow bay between the islands and the main-land, the Laguna Madre, was not available for heavy draught vessels, so that the transports were compelled to anchor off the entrance, perhaps four miles from the main-land, and all communication with Point Isabel was by boats.

Having thus established a base at Point Isabel, and left a suitable guard, Taylor rejoined the main body of his little army, and on March 28, 1846, reached the Rio Grande opposite Matamoros. His arrival, he reported, seemed to have created a great deal of excitement in the town, and a great deal of activity was displayed in the preparation of batteries. The attitude of the Mexicans was decidedly hostile; but his march had been unopposed.[2]

The order directing Taylor to advance to the Rio Grande was not then known to the American public, but at a later day Polk and his administration were bitterly blamed for

[1] Henry's *Campaign Sketches*, 52–64, gives an intelligent and amusing account of the incidents of this march day by day. The author was a graduate of West Point and an officer of the fourth U. S. infantry.

[2] Taylor to Marcy, March 25 and 29, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 129, 132.

giving it. Their purpose, it was said, was to bring about a collision, to try to bring on a war, and the administration was accused of wishing to provoke the Mexicans to attack the American forces, so that it might appear to the world—and especially to so much of it as sat in Congress—that the war, if war ensued, was one of defence and not of aggression. No direct contemporaneous evidence was then produced in support of this assertion, and none seems to be now available. All the public utterances of the party in power were in favor of peace; and to the inquiry whether the executive officers of the United States were secretly trying to bring about a war no positive answer can be given. Conclusions more or less plausible may of course be reached from a consideration of the general situation in the winter of 1846–1847, and of the character and the wishes and policy, at that time, of Polk and his cabinet.

The President himself was a man without wide culture or knowledge, wholly devoid of imagination, untravelled, unacquainted with either the Spanish or the Mexican character, and with little experience in the conduct of foreign affairs. To a strong intelligence he added a dogged strength of will, such as few of his contemporaries possessed; and with all the obstinacy and persistence of his nature he desired to acquire California. But he then hoped, and probably believed, that California might be got by negotiation; for all the evidence seemed to show that it was independent of Mexico in all but name, and that it could only be governed by such expenditures for men and ships as Mexico was hopelessly unable to make. He was also aware that Mexico was in dire need of money—money to pacify her foreign creditors and money to set her internal affairs in some sort of order.

For California Polk was ready to pay most liberally; and if it could have been bought, precisely as Louisiana had been bought, and as Florida had been bought, there was no reason to doubt that the Senate would have consented to the bargain, and that Congress would have voted the purchase-money. But the President could hardly have felt any

confidence that Congress, under the existing circumstances, would have been willing either to declare war or to vote the money necessary to carry it on.

The northeastern states, with a strong and growing feeling in favor of limiting the area of slavery, would certainly not have looked with favor upon a war which, it would be asserted, was prosecuted for the purpose of acquiring more slave territory. New England and the Middle states had consented, at the election a little over a year before, by a small majority, to the annexation of Texas, but there was no particular desire apparent on their part to expand further at the expense of Mexico. In the northwestern states—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan—the desire for territorial expansion was undoubtedly very much greater than on the Atlantic coast; but even in the northwest the feeling against the extension of slavery would probably have made a war with Mexico at that time generally unpopular.

It was asserted, however, that the South desired a war. For what possible reason the South, in January, 1846, should have desired a war it is hard to see. That a majority of the people of that section desired the annexation of Texas is quite true; annexation had been peacefully accomplished more than six months before; the United States was in undisturbed possession of Texas, and there was no reason whatever to believe that Mexico could make any serious effort to recover it. It was perfectly clear that Mexico was less capable of recovering it then than at any time in the previous ten years, and the latest information was that another revolution was on the point of breaking out, which would still further incapacitate her.

President Polk came from a southwestern slave state, and, it may be assumed, shared fully the views of the people of Tennessee. But though Polk earnestly desired expansion, he was fully occupied in trying to secure it in the northwestern corner of the country by gaining as much as he could of the territory of Oregon. In the month of January, 1846, a settlement with Great Britain was by no means assured. The temper of Great Britain and the temper of

the American Senate were most uncertain. It can hardly be supposed, therefore, that Polk should have wished to provoke Mexico into a war at that particular time.

But even if Polk himself, as a Southern man, had desired to bring about a Mexican war, no such motive could have existed in the minds of his Secretaries of the State, War, and Navy Departments, who were all Northern men. They were perfectly well aware that a war then would not be popular in either Pennsylvania or New York or Massachusetts. They were men who were accustomed to speak their minds. The Secretary of State in particular had shown himself in cabinet discussions extremely voluble in disapproving measures which he thought might possibly lead to war; and he was dreadfully alarmed at the possibilities which the Oregon question seemed to offer. But in this instance neither Buchanan nor Marcy nor Bancroft seem to have spoken a word of protest.

What the cabinet really knew of Mexico was very little. They were aware that it had for years threatened war on Texas, and that it had never fulfilled its threats. They had every reason to suppose that the members of Herrera's administration were individually favorable to negotiation, and although Slidell had certainly not been greeted with cordiality, his letters were hopeful. In the despatch of December 17, 1845, received from him on January 12, 1846, he had said:

"A revolution, and that before the meeting of Congress, is a probable event; a change of ministers almost a certain one. Notwithstanding the desire, which I believe the present administration really entertains, to adjust all their difficulties with us, so feeble and inert is it, that I am rather inclined to the opinion that the chances of a successful negotiation would be better with one more hostile, but possessing greater energy."[1]

The American cabinet on the thirteenth of January, therefore, knew that Slidell had not yet been received, that it

[1] Slidell to Buchanan, Dec. 17, 1845; *ibid.*, 26. And see Buchanan to Slidell, Jan. 20, 1846; *ibid.*, 33.

was probable he would not be, that Herrera's government was unstable, but friendly, and that the chances of success under a new government might be better. With this knowledge before them, it was agreed, apparently without discussion or dissent, to order Taylor to move from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande. The President, who noted so fully all discussions in his cabinet, only wrote as follows:

"*Tuesday, 13th January* 1846.—There was a regular meeting of the Cabinet to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was understood to be officially engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. States. Despatches from Mexico, which had been received last evening, were read and considered. Some other public matters not important were also considered. Had a dinner-party to-day."[1]

This was all. Polk's silence as to the orders to Taylor was, of course, not inconsistent with an expectation on the President's part that Taylor's movement would provoke the Mexicans to warlike deeds. But it was also entirely consistent with the belief which Taylor had expressed more than three months before, that the forward movements of the army and navy were calculated to produce very different results.[2] In the first place, a display of force might serve as a strong hint to the Mexican government of the advisability of receiving Slidell. In the second place, *beati possidentes* was an old maxim of diplomacy, and actual possession of the east bank of the Rio Grande might be a useful card to play if it came to framing a treaty. And in the third place, if a war ever did result, an advanced position might prove of distinct benefit from the military point of view.

That this display of force provoked the Mexicans, and induced them to fight rather than to bargain, proves nothing as to the intentions of the American cabinet. It shows,

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 164.

[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Oct. 4, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 107–109. There were "a thousand reports" in Taylor's camp as to the future movements of the army. One young staff-officer wrote to his wife in December that if the result of Slidell's negotiations proved unfavorable, "I think we will be thrown forward to occupy the line of boundary as claimed by the United States, and take forcible possession of it, and let Mexico do what she can."—(*Life and Letters of General Meade*, I, 39.)

perhaps, nothing more than their ignorance of Mexican nature. John Bull might be looked straight in the eye, and spoken to firmly and boldly to some advantage; but John Bull had a good deal to lose, while Mexico had nothing except her dignity. But she valued dignity above money or land. "The Mexican," said Henry Addington, who was Under-Secretary in the British Foreign Office, and knew the Spanish character well, "the Mexican is like a mule—if you spur him too much he will back off the precipice with you";[1] and Polk and his advisers had yet a good deal to learn both of mules and men.

The Mexican government had long before declared their intention of doing nothing to precipitate war, and to await attack from their opponents. The Mexicans, however, asserted, and Polk's critics at home echoed the assertion, that the American troops were the first aggressors by their advance to the westward of the Nueces River, which, it was said, had always constituted the recognized boundary of Texas. And if this statement was correct, Taylor's seizure of Point Isabel and his march to the Rio Grande were as much an invasion of the department of Tamaulipas as if he had landed near Tampico and had advanced on that town through the southern portion of the same department.

From a Mexican point of view the inquiry as to the western boundary of Texas was, strictly speaking, illogical. The Mexican government had always insisted that it had never parted with its ownership of Texas; it had declared repeatedly that the annexation of Texas by the United States was of itself a *casus belli*; and in this aspect of the case it was as bad for an American army to enter Texas as to enter Tamaulipas. Moreover, Taylor had been encamped west of the Nueces since the beginning of August, 1845, and therefore in reality the invasion had been begun at that time.

From an American point of view, however, the inquiry was of real importance. Congress had authorized the incorporation of Texas into the Union, but it had never authorized the invasion of Mexico; and if the President, in

[1] Jones, 370. Addington had been for some years British minister in Spain.

moving troops west of the Nueces, had sent them beyond the limits of Texas, he had plainly acted without any color of law. Whether he had really exceeded his authority depended on the answer to the question: Was the Nueces recognized as the boundary?

Historically there could be little doubt that prior to 1836 it had been so regarded. The Spaniards and their successors all through the New World, it is true, were notoriously careless about boundaries. Every country in South and Central America was involved in disputes with its neighbors over boundary questions, but the Spanish maps and descriptions of Texas made in the first years of the nineteenth century, with quite unusual unanimity, agreed that the Nueces, near the Gulf, divided Tamaulipas from Texas.[1] The republic of Texas, however, by one of its earliest legislative acts, following their treaty with Santa Anna, had declared that Texas was bounded by the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source, and the leading Texans attached very great importance to that line. The United States had acquired all the rights of Texas, whatever they might be, and the claim to a disputed boundary was regarded in Washington as an asset of much value in effecting a definite settlement with Mexico.

The value of the territory for purposes of bargaining was certainly undeniable, although when it came to formulating the arguments by which the claim of Texas and the United States could be sustained, serious difficulties were experienced. Donelson, the American chargé in Texas, had stated the case fully,[2] and Buchanan, in preparing the instructions for Slidell, had also tried his hand, though without much success. The jurisdiction of Texas, it was said, had been extended beyond the Nueces, and representatives from the country between it and the Rio Grande had sat in her Congress and convention. This, however, was only an assertion of actual possession, and not a very strong

[1] An accurate summary of the evidence of "the official Spanish delimitation of Texas" will be found in Garrison's "Westward Extension," *The American Nation Series*, vol. XVII, 98–106.

[2] Donelson to Buchanan, July 11, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 103.

assertion at that. The claim of a *right* to possession was based solely on the ground that "this portion of the territory was embraced within the limits of ancient Louisiana." The evidence as to the extent of "ancient Louisiana" has already been stated in sufficient detail;[1] and as even Buchanan was forced to admit that the United States by the Florida treaty had ceded "all that part of ancient Louisiana within the present limits of Texas," the important inquiry narrowed itself to the question of what was "the extent of the territorial rights which Texas has acquired by the sword." In other words, the controversy really resolved itself into the question of fact as to what was the extent of the Texan conquests, and how far Texas had actually exercised her jurisdiction.

Upon that point the evidence was reasonably clear. The remnants of Santa Anna's army, after San Jacinto, were instructed by him to retire beyond the Rio Grande; and they did, in point of fact, ultimately retreat to Matamoros. From that time forward the country lying between the line of the Nueces and the Rio Grande was practically neutral ground, permanently possessed by neither party, and only crossed occasionally by smugglers and Indians. At Corpus Christi the Texans had a small settlement west of the Nueces, and they may be said to have occupied the whole valley of the Nueces. Opposite Matamoros there were a number of scattered Mexican ranches, and what might be called villages on the island of Santiago and at Point Isabel; while higher up the river, at Laredo, there was a Mexican settlement of some size on the east bank. The Mexican ranches or villages, however, were not far back from the Rio Grande, a fact recognised in General Woll's proclamation of June 20, 1844, in which he announced that any one found more than one league from the river would be shot.[2] The proof of actual and permanent possession of this whole territory by the Texan government was therefore lacking, for in fact neither they nor the Mexicans exercised any actual control over the entire region in dispute.

[1] See Vol. I, Chapter I.

[2] See Vol. I, page 655.

The government in Washington was well aware of these salient facts of the case. Donelson, the American chargé d'affaires in Texas, had informed the Secretary of State that Texas had established no posts on the Rio Grande; that the territory west of the Nueces had been in the possession of both parties; and that the ownership of the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was "a disputed question."[1] It was in full view of these facts that the orders to Taylor were issued. He had been first told to select and occupy a healthy post "on or near the Rio Grande,"[2] but six weeks later he was informed that he was expected to "approach as near the boundary line—the Rio Grande—as prudence will dictate. With this in view the President desires that your position, for a part of your forces at least, should be west of the river Nueces." Much latitude was therefore allowed as to the precise point for a camp, and when Donelson suggested the occupation of Corpus Christi, "said to be as healthy as Pensacola, a convenient place for supplies, and *the most western point now occupied by Texas*," Taylor announced that until further orders he would confine himself to the line of the Nueces, "which covers all the settlements." These movements were expressly approved.[3]

No further orders seem to have been sent to Taylor during the summer of 1845; but early in the autumn he wrote, apparently as his own suggestion, that although Corpus Christi had thus far been the best possible position, yet he thought it a question whether the views of the government would be best carried out by his remaining longer at that point.

"If our government," he wrote, "in settling the question of boundary, makes the line of the Rio Grande an ultimatum, *I cannot doubt that the settlement will be greatly facilitated and hastened by our taking possession at once of one or two suitable points on or quite near that river.* Our strength and state of preparation should be displayed

[1] Donelson to Buchanan, June 4 and 23, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 66, 83.

[2] Bancroft to Taylor, June 15, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81.

[3] Taylor to Adjutant-General, July 8, 1845; Marcy to Taylor, July 30, 1845; *ibid.*, 302, 307.

in a manner not to be mistaken. . . . We are too far from the frontier to impress the government of Mexico with our readiness to vindicate, by force of arms if necessary, our title to the country as far as the Rio Grande."

He also added in the same despatch, that, if a forward movement was to be made, Point Isabel and Laredo were the points he would recommend for occupation.[1] But in spite of this expression of Taylor's opinion in October, orders for the movement he suggested were not sent to him until the following month of January.

It must also be noted that the American government, while asserting that Texas was in possession of the disputed territory, actually supposed that there were Mexican troops east of the Rio Grande; for Taylor had been instructed not to disturb "any posts on the Eastern side thereof which are in the actual occupancy of Mexican forces, or Mexican settlements, over which the republic of Texas did not exercise jurisdiction at the period of annexation, or shortly before that event."[2]

With the question of right Taylor and his men evidently had nothing to do. Whatever blame there may be for pushing forward into a region over which Texas asserted but did not exercise actual jurisdiction, and to which she could therefore have given no clear title, must rest solely with the authorities at Washington.

Taylor's advance to the Rio Grande, as has been already said, was unopposed, but it was not unobserved. General Francisco Mejía, who commanded the troops in Matamoros, hearing that the American force were marching toward him, sent a small force of cavalry to watch the movement, and as an additional precaution, he issued a fiery proclamation addressed to the inhabitants of the department of Tamaulipas and the troops under his command, in which he charged the United States with dissimulation, fraud, and the basest

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Oct. 4, 1845; *Ibid.*, 107. The italics are not in the original.

[2] Marcy to Taylor, July 8 and 30, 1845; *Ibid.*, 806, 807.

treachery; announced that "the degenerate sons of Washington," not satisfied with annexing Texas, were advancing to take possession of a large part of Tamaulipas, and called upon citizens and soldiers alike to oppose the invader. Alluding to the defeat of the Spanish expedition at Tampico, in 1829, he burst into a strain of characteristic eloquence:

"If the banks of the Panuco have been immortalised by the defeat of an enemy, respectable and worthy of the valor of Mexico; those of the Bravo shall witness the ignominy of the proud sons of the north, and its deep waters shall serve as the sepulchre of those who dare approach it. . . . Let the enemy then come, whom you are burning to meet on the field of battle. We shall fight, and the crown of triumph shall be the merited reward of your valor and discipline. *A las armas! Viva la nación Mejicana! Viva la independencia!*"[1]

The party of Mexican cavalry sent out to observe Taylor's march met him about thirty miles from Matamoros at a small tidal creek, the Arroyo Colorado, on March 20, 1846, and stated they had peremptory orders to open fire if the American troops attempted to cross it. Taylor neglected the warning and crossed the creek, whereupon the reconnoitring party retreated without firing a shot, and were pursued, but not molested.[2] On March 24 a party of citizens from Matamoros were met, who also presented a formal protest against the occupation of "the northern district of Tamaulipas," to which Taylor promised a written answer, and continued his march.[3]

Having arrived opposite Matamoros on the twenty-eighth of March, Taylor proceeded to intrench himself and to establish a battery of eighteen-pounder guns commanding the town; but for four weeks no actual hostilities took place, Taylor continuing to strengthen his position by laying out "a strong bastioned field fort" for a garrison of five hundred men. The Mexicans, on their side, also threw up some works designed to prevent the Americans from crossing the river,

[1] Text and translation in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 126–129.
[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, March 21, 1846; *ibid.*, 122.
[3] Same to same, March 25, 1846; *ibid.*, 129. The answer was sent on March 28.—(*Ibid.*, 137.)

although Taylor believed that these works were "scantily armed with guns of inferior calibre," which would "oppose very feeble obstacles" in the event of his attempting to cross.[1]

Matters were in this state on the eleventh of April, when General Pedro Ampudia—the same Ampudia who had made himself conspicuous at the time of the capture of Sentmanat—arrived in Matamoros at the head of a considerable body of troops, and on the following day addressed a communication to Taylor. The substance of his letter was that the United States had insulted and exasperated the Mexican nation by advancing to the Rio Grande, and that therefore—

"by explicit and definitive orders of my government, which neither can, will, nor should receive new outrages, I require you in all form, and at latest in the peremptory term of twenty-four hours, to break up your camp and retire to the other bank of the Nueces River, while our governments are regulating the pending question in relation to Texas. If you insist on remaining upon the soil of the department of Tamaulipas, it will clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question; and in that case I advise you that we accept the war to which, with so much injustice on your part, you provoke us."[2]

Taylor replied immediately, declining to enter into a discussion of international questions and referring to the fact that an envoy had already been sent by the United States to Mexico for the purpose of settling the boundary by negotiation. He himself, he said, had been ordered to occupy the country up to the left bank of the Rio Grande until the boundary should be definitively settled; he had carefully abstained from all acts of hostility; his instructions did not permit him to retrograde from the position he occupied; and the responsibility for war, if it ensued, must rest "with those who rashly commence hostilities."[3]

Ampudia did not follow up his threats, and Taylor's next move was to commit an act which war alone would justify—though he himself described it as "a measure not in itself

[1] Same to same, April 6, 1846; *ibid.*, 133.
[2] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 140. [3] *Ibid.*, 139.

hostile, but a simple defensive precaution" [1]—that is, he arranged with the naval force off the mouth of the Rio Grande to institute a blockade of the river; and as the troops in Matamoros received their supplies largely by water, the measure was a serious annoyance to Ampudia, who sent a vehement protest. Taylor replied that he would not raise the blockade without orders from Washington, "unless indeed you desire an armistice pending the final settlement of the question between the governments," [2] and the blockade continued to be enforced.

In these acts of Taylor's the Mexican government thought it saw a sufficient justification for an attack on the United States forces under his command. Both governments had asserted that they would act only on the defensive; but President Paredes now directed that what he called a "defensive war" should be begun. In a proclamation *urbi et orbi*, published April 23, 1846, he explained his position thus:

"The ancient injuries and the attacks which ever since the year 1836 the Government of the United States has incessantly inflicted upon the people of Mexico, have been crowned by the insult of sending us a Minister who is accredited to our government as a resident Minister, as if the relations between the two Republics had suffered no alteration since the final act of the annexation of Texas was consummated. At the very moment that Mr. Slidell presented himself the troops of the United States were occupying our territory. Their squadrons threatened our ports, and they were preparing to occupy the peninsula of the Californias of which the question of Oregon with England is no more than a preliminary. I did not admit Mr. Slidell because the dignity of the nation would repel this new insult.

"In the meantime the army of the United States encamped at Corpus Christi and occupied the Island of Padre Vallin, and then marched to Santa Isabel and the flag of the stars waved on the right bank [*sic*] of the Rio Bravo del Norte opposite the city of Matamoros, they previously stopping the navigation of the river by means of their ships of war. The town of Laredo was surprised by a party of their troops and a piquet of our forces who had been sent there to reconnoitre was disarmed. Hostilities therefore have been begun by the United States of America, who have undertaken new conquests in

[1] Taylor to Arista, April 25, 1846; *ibid.*, 1206. [2] *Ibid.*, 138, 144, 145.

the territory lying within the line of the Departments of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon while the troops of the United States are threatening Monterey in Upper California. . . .

"So many and such bitter outrages can be tolerated no longer, and I have commanded the general-in-chief of the division of our northern frontier to attack the army which is attacking us; to answer with war the enemy who makes war upon us; and that—invoking the god of battles—the valor of our soldiers may preserve our unquestionable right to the territory, and the honor of our arms which are not to be employed but in defence of justice. Our general, abiding by established usages and in accordance with the positive directions of my government, has demanded from the commander-in-chief of the American troops that they retire to the other side of the Nueces River, the ancient boundary of Texas, and the demand has been refused. . . .

"I solemnly announce that I do not decree war against the government of the United States of America, because it belongs to the august Congress of the nation, and not to the Executive, to decide definitely what reparation must be exacted for such injuries. But the defence of Mexican territory which the troops of the United States are invading is an urgent necessity, and my responsibility before the nation would be immense if I did not order the repulse of forces which are acting as enemies; and I have so ordered. From this day defensive war begins, and every point of our territory which may be invaded or attacked shall be defended by force."[1]

The day after the date of this proclamation General Arista arrived and took command, notified Taylor that he considered hostilities begun and that he should prosecute them, and at once began crossing the river.[2] His plan was to send his cavalry to cross above Taylor's position, while the main body of infantry and artillery would cross below, and thus

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 559. The capture of Laredo mentioned by Paredes was made, apparently, by a party of Texas rangers, under Major Hays.—(H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 107, 115.) The reference to American forces threatening Monterey in Upper California presumably relates to Frémont's visit to that neighborhood the first week in March, 1846, as to which see below.

[2] C. M. Bustamante asserts that Ampudia was superseded because the administration was afraid he would pronounce for Santa Anna. Bustamante goes on to denounce Arista for his dilatory and incompetent management, and accuses him at great length of corrupt and treasonable relations with the enemy.—(*Nuevo Bernal Díaz*, II, 4, 21–37.) Arista's notification to Taylor, and Taylor's reply of April 25, 1846, will be found in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1204, 1205.

cut Taylor off from his base of supplies at Point Isabel.[1] The plan involved some serious risks, for Arista had no pontoons, and in the event of a defeat his position, with a considerable river in his rear, might prove disastrous. However, on April 24 General Torrejon, with all of Arista's cavalry and some infantry, was across the Rio Grande, and on the following day they came upon a scouting party of sixty-three American dragoons, under Captain Thornton, who after a short skirmish were surrounded and captured. The American casualties were sixteen killed and wounded.[2] Torrejon sent his prisoners to Matamoros, and continued his march round Taylor's position to a point on the river opposite the rancho de Longoreño, some twelve miles below Matamoros, which had been selected for the crossing of the main body of the Mexican force.

Taylor immediately despatched a brief account of the skirmish to Washington. "Hostilities," he wrote, "may now be considered as commenced," and he reported that he had called (under authority previously given) upon the governors of Texas and Louisiana for eight regiments of volunteers, or five thousand men in all.[3]

For the next two or three days Taylor remained stationary, finishing his fort and learning what he could of the enemy's movements, until he finally received information that the whole Mexican army was preparing to cross the river below Matamoros, with a view to effecting a junction with the force from above. He concluded that the object of the movement was an attack upon the depot at Point Isabel, and he therefore determined to march there, leaving the necessary garrison in the fort opposite Matamoros. Whether this movement was wise, under the circumstances, may be doubted. He was already in a critical condition, with his base of sup-

[1] Ampudia subsequently asserted that the plan was his, and that he had made his preparations to cross on the fifteenth of April, but had been stopped by an order directing him to suspend operations until Arista's arrival.—(*Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra entre México y los E. U.*, 34.)

[2] See reports of Captains Hardee and Thornton in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 291, 200.

[3] Taylor to Adjutant-General, April 26, 1846; *ibid.*, 140.

plies nearly twenty miles away, and he was opposed by an enemy numerically superior. The advantages to be gained from a victory were relatively slight; the injury that would result from a defeat was enormous, for it must have meant the annihilation of Taylor's force. Nevertheless, he took the chances, and was thoroughly justified by success.

One regiment of infantry and two companies of artillery, together with the sick, numbering in all not over five hundred men, having been left behind under command of Major Brown, of the infantry, Taylor, with the remainder of his little army, set out on the afternoon of the first of May for Point Isabel. On the next day he arrived at that place without having discovered any signs of the enemy.[1]

Brown was attacked on the morning of the third of May, but only by a long-range cannonade, which did little damage. The fort, planned by Captain Mansfield, of the United States Engineers, was built upon a triangular point of land, with the river on two sides of it, and no very formidable attempt was made to approach it on the land side. The total American casualties were two killed and ten wounded. Among the latter was Brown himself, who was so seriously injured during the cannonade, which lasted a hundred and sixty hours, that he died shortly afterward of his wounds. His memory has been preserved in the name of Fort Brown, and of Brownsville, the town which has since grown up about it.[2]

For five days Taylor remained at Point Isabel, where the sounds of the cannonade at Matamoros reached him. He strengthened the position at the Point, and the Gulf squadron (which he seems to have sent for) having arrived on the sixth of May, five hundred marines and bluejackets, under Captain Gregory of the U. S. S. *Raritan*, were landed to

[1] Same to same, May 3, 1846; *ibid.*, 289. Arista had withdrawn his cavalry from Taylor's line of march in order to protect his own troops in crossing the river. This was subsequently severely criticised as unnecessary, and as the cause of serious delay which at least contributed to the disastrous result of his movement. For further details as to Taylor's movements, see Meade, I, 53–73.

[2] See detailed reports in Sen. Doc. 388, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 31–37. The fort was abandoned by the War Department in 1907. A sketch map of the position in 1846 will be found in Meade, I, 73.

assist in defending the post.[1] On the next day Taylor and his men, with a part of the Point Isabel garrison, who were replaced by a few recruits recently arrived from New Orleans, set out on their return to Fort Brown. They had with them a large train of wagons containing supplies of provisions and ammunition, and two eighteen-pounder guns drawn by oxen.

Arista, on his part, had shown no great activity in carrying out his plan. He wasted a week after he had despatched Torrejon and the cavalry to the east side of the Rio Grande; so that it was not until the first day of May that his army was united on the Texan side of the river.[2] The next day he learned that Taylor had passed him, and was well on the way to Point Isabel. Fearing that the American troops left at the fort might make some attempt on Matamoros, Arista sent back a battalion to the defence of the town, sent some cavalry to watch Taylor, and with the bulk of his forces encamped at Palo Alto, where Taylor's infantry had encamped six weeks earlier on their way to Matamoros. Palo Alto, however, was ill supplied with water, and on the fourth of May Arista fell back to the Tanques del Ramireño, a point about eight miles from the river, and half-way between Palo Alto and the point where the Mexican army had crossed. From there he sent Ampudia to besiege Fort Brown, with a force consisting of perhaps a thousand infantry and four guns. Ampudia, as has been seen, accomplished nothing.

On the morning of Friday, the eighth of May, Arista learned that Taylor was on his march back to Fort Brown, and at once set his troops in motion for the open prairie at Palo Alto, which he had selected as the scene of a battle. Shortly after noon his forces were in position, and at half past two he was joined by Ampudia, who had been ordered to raise the siege of the fort and to join the commander-in-chief.

The numbers of the Mexicans were never very clearly ascertained. In the previous December Arista, writing to

[1] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy;* H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 380. Parker's *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 50.

[2] His first division, under Ampudia, crossed on April 30, and the second on the morning of May 1.

Paredes for reinforcements, said he had available only 800 men at Matamoros, 420 at the presidio of the Rio Grande, and barely 1,200 at his own ranch of Mamulique.[1] This made 2,420 in all. Paredes, of course, sent no reinforcements at that time, as he needed them himself for his march on the city of Mexico; but as soon as he felt strong enough to spare any troops he detached Ampudia, who reached Matamoros with about 2,200 men.[2] There were also some reinforcements from Tampico, and possibly other points, so that when Arista took command his force may be reckoned at about 5,200.[3]

These troops were considered as good as any in the Mexican army. There were four regiments of infantry of the line, the permanent battalions of Tampico, Mexico, Puebla, and Morelia, three regiments of cavalry, a battalion of engineers (*zapadores*), and some local national guards and *guardacostas*. They had altogether 26 field-pieces; but they were ill supplied with provisions or reserve ammunition, and they were totally without surgeons or field-hospitals. Deducting 190 men left by Ampudia in observation in front of Fort Brown, and the garrison left in Matamoros, numbering 1,350, Arista, according to Mexican reports, had in line at Palo Alto 3,270 men, with 12 guns—an estimate which is probably too low.[4]

The American force amounted to 2,111 sabres and bayonets, or about 2,300 men in all[5]—roughly speaking, 70 per cent of the acknowledged Mexican strength. But if Taylor's army was small, it was of high quality. The officers, with very few exceptions, were graduates of West Point. The men, though a large proportion were foreigners—English, Irish, and German immigrants—had been long and carefully drilled, especially during the months that they had been in camp at Corpus Christi, and no army that the United States had ever put in the field was thought to have been more efficient.

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 545.

[2] He is said to have left the city of Mexico on January 11, 1846, with 4,000 men and 6 guns.—(*Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, I, 115.)

[3] Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 33. [4] *Ibid.*, 35, 44.

[5] Ripley's *War with Mexico*, I, 122.

Its commander, Zachary Taylor, a colonel in actual rank but a brigadier-general by brevet, was a man in his sixty-second year, who had spent nearly forty years of his life in Indian fighting and in the routine duties of small frontier posts. His chief exploit in the War of 1812 was the defence of Fort Harrison, on the Wabash River, against a strong force of Indians. He took a creditable part in the Black Hawk War in 1832, and he fought the Seminoles in Florida from 1837 to 1839. This, with such little reading as he might have done, was the whole of his military education.

He was a native of Virginia, but when he was only ten years old his father had removed—one of the first settlers—to Kentucky, where the future general got a little schooling and much hard work on the paternal farm. He had never had much experience of cities or the world. He had hardly ever visited Washington, and owed such advancement as he had thus far attained solely to seniority and a conscientious performance of routine duty.

Mentally and physically he was a plain and unpretending citizen. Short and sturdy in build, with a typically Western carelessness in respect to dress, he looked, what he had been, a Kentucky farmer. His dislike for uniforms was notorious, and almost amounted to a mania. The army was full of stories about his carelessness in dress and his dislike for ceremony. A Mexican officer, sublieutenant Don Manuel Balbontin, who was at one time a prisoner in Taylor's camp, was amazed at the general's appearance when he first saw him, sitting on a camp-stool, in his shirt-sleeves, in front of his tent. A little while after, the general was seen riding out of camp.

"He wore a blue checked gingham coat, blue trousers without any braid, a linen waistcoat and a broad-brimmed straw hat. Neither his horse nor his saddle had any military ornament."

The only explanation that presented itself to the Mexican mind was that the general was going to make a dangerous reconnoissance alone. But Don Manuel did not know Taylor.[1]

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 38.

He was considerate to his men, thoroughly appreciative of his officers, and was thought to be scrupulously just. In a remarkable degree he enjoyed the affection and respect of his army. They believed in him thoroughly, and were always ready with a cheer for "Old Rough and Ready."

The Mexican force, in its composition and equipment, presented a striking contrast to its adversaries. Like all Mexican armies, the rank and file were of Indian blood, the men being almost invariably recruited from the criminal classes or by means of a crude system of press-gangs. There were few volunteers, either militia or regulars, although during the stress of revolutions it had been the custom, at times, to raise more or less irregular bodies under various names, who were composed, partly at least, of volunteers, and who were usually incorporated subsequently in the regular army. Under the corporal's stick, the men learned in the barracks the first elements of the manual of arms and the routine of army life, but there seems rarely to have been any drilling of large bodies. The system of tactics and the army regulations were nominally the same as those of the Spanish army prior to 1821, but, owing to the constant succession of revolutions, discipline had become much relaxed.

The pay of the troops was small and extremely irregular; and indeed some corps went unpaid for years, so that the men were kept from starvation only by being allowed to work out as laborers for hire. There was no such thing as a regular commissariat. When in garrison the troops seem to have generally purchased their own food, but on the march they were furnished with rations, consisting of meat and a few tortillas or a handful of corn. Even these scanty rations were supplied without system, for in general troops on the march lived off the country through which they passed. There was no organized transport, essential supplies being usually carried on mule-back, or more rarely in country carts, mules and carts being commandeered for the occasion. The troops stationed in the larger cities were usually handsomely dressed, to make a show at military and religious festivities, but the clothing of the greater part of the army

was often ragged, the men lacking the most essential articles. The white cotton suits and straw sombreros of the Mexican peasantry were not unfrequently worn.

The officers, who were generally of Spanish descent, formed a heterogeneous body. Some of them were graduates of the military college at Chapultepec, some had risen from the ranks, and some were purely political appointees from civil life.

The infantry in both armies was equipped with smooth-bore flintlock muskets, high military authorities not being yet persuaded of the advantages of rifles or percussion-locks.[1] The Mexican small-arms were old English Tower muskets, which had been acquired in large quantities, some fifteen or twenty years before, when the English loan was made by the government. The American weapons were the product of the Springfield Arsenal, and probably as good as could then be made. The mounted men on both sides were what was then described as "light" cavalry, or dragoons, armed with sabre and carbine; and, in addition, the larger part of the Mexican cavalry also carried the lance. The Mexican field artillery was of the then antiquated Gribeauval system, but of very various calibres, and mounted on rough and heavy carriages. It possessed no reserve ammunition wagons. Neither in range, nor mobility, nor accuracy of fire, could it compare for a moment with the American artillery.[2]

[1] "It may be interesting to state," the colonel of the Mississippi volunteers wrote many years afterward, "that General Scott endeavored to persuade me not to take more rifles than enough for four companies, and objected particularly to percussion arms as not having been sufficiently tested for the use of troops in the field. Knowing that the Mississippians would have no confidence in the old flint-lock muskets, I insisted on their being armed with the kind of rifle then recently made at New Haven, Conn.—the Whitney rifle."—(*Memoir of Jefferson Davis*, I, 247.) The manufacture of percussion muskets had been begun at Springfield in 1844, when 3,200 were turned out; and a model of a percussion rifle was manufactured at Harper's Ferry the same year.—(Sen. Doc. 1, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 266.) In the next year 14,332 percussion muskets were manufactured, the manufacture of flint-lock pieces was discontinued, and arrangements were made for altering arms in store to percussion muskets. —(Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 403, 404.) Percussion muskets were issued at that time to the West Point cadets, but not to troops in the field until a later period.

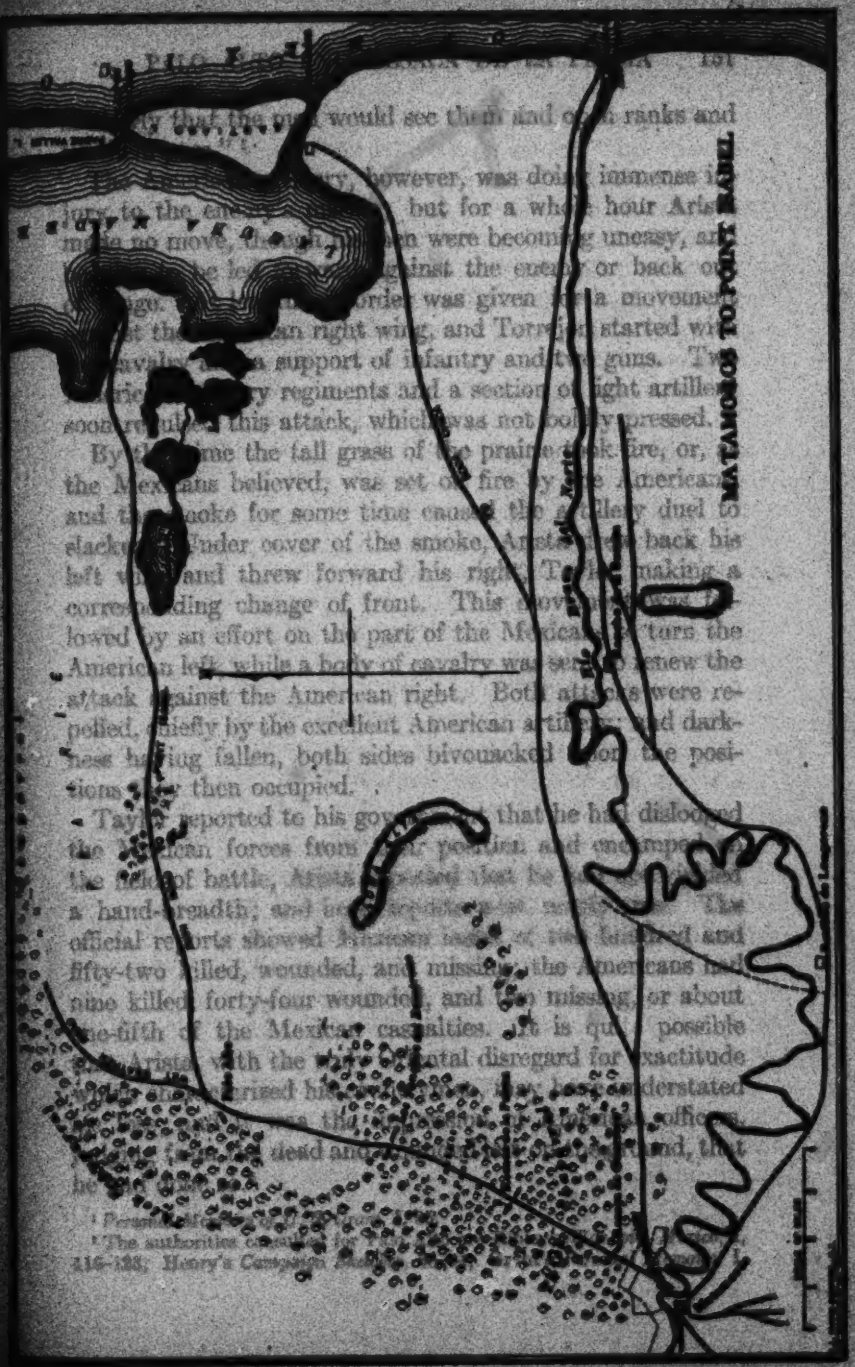
[2] The foregoing account is mainly derived from Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 76, 77.

Arista, the commanding general, was more of a politician than a soldier, though he had served as a youth in the royal Spanish army, and had filled various positions in the Mexican. He was reputed to be a man of wealth, and owned a good deal of land in northern Mexico. He had never, it seems, been on good terms with his second in command, General Ampudia, and the latter nursed a grievance at having been superseded by Arista a few days before; so that when the army crossed the Rio Grande there was a marked lack of cordial co-operation between the two generals.

It was the early afternoon of the eighth of May when Arista's men arrived on the selected ground at Palo Alto, and formed in line in a position at right angles to the road from Point Isabel, their right resting on a small hill, their left on a swampy wood. In front of them stretched an open prairie upon which Taylor's forces were seen advancing.

Before the head of his column came within range of the Mexican artillery Taylor halted and deployed in line of battle, facing the enemy. His two eighteen-pounder guns were in the centre, the two batteries of field artillery were posted in intervals of the line to the right and left, and the cavalry was held in reserve in the rear, while one squadron of cavalry and a small detachment of infantry were left to guard the train of three hundred wagons that Taylor was escorting. The troops were next directed to fill their canteens from a water hole on the right of the position, and then, all being ready, at two o'clock in the afternoon the American line moved forward.

Arista had evidently determined to await attack, and he made no move until the American troops came within range, when his artillery opened fire. Taylor at once halted, advanced his guns to the front, and replied. "The infantry," wrote a young American officer, whose first battle it was, "stood at order arms as spectators, watching the effect of our shots upon the enemy, and watching his shots so as to step out of their way." The Mexican round shot did little damage, "because they would strike the ground long before they reached our line, and ricochetted through the tall grass


MATAMOROS TO POINT ISABEL

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so slowly that the men would see them and open ranks and let them pass." [1]

The American artillery, however, was doing immense injury to the enemy's masses; but for a whole hour Arista made no move, though his men were becoming uneasy, and begging to be led forward against the enemy or back out of range. At length an order was given for a movement against the American right wing, and Torrejon started with the cavalry and a support of infantry and two guns. Two American infantry regiments and a section of light artillery soon repulsed this attack, which was not boldly pressed.

By this time the tall grass of the prairie took fire, or, as the Mexicans believed, was set on fire by the Americans, and the smoke for some time caused the artillery duel to slacken. Under cover of the smoke, Arista drew back his left wing and threw forward his right, Taylor making a corresponding change of front. This movement was followed by an effort on the part of the Mexicans to turn the American left, while a body of cavalry was sent to renew the attack against the American right. Both attacks were repelled, chiefly by the excellent American artillery; and darkness having fallen, both sides bivouacked upon the positions they then occupied.

Taylor reported to his government that he had dislodged the Mexican forces from their position and encamped on the field of battle, Arista reported that he had not yielded a hand-breadth; and both reports were nearly true. The official reports showed Mexican losses of two hundred and fifty-two killed, wounded, and missing; the Americans had nine killed, forty-four wounded, and two missing, or about one-fifth of the Mexican casualties. It is quite possible that Arista, with the truly Oriental disregard for exactitude which characterised his countrymen, may have understated his loss; and it was the impression of American officers, judging from the dead and wounded left on the ground, that he had done so.[2]

[1] *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 95.

[2] The authorities consulted for Palo Alto are Ripley's *War with Mexico*, I, 116-123; Henry's *Campaign Sketches*, 88-94; Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, I,

At dawn on the morning of Saturday, the ninth of May, Arista began an orderly retreat, and by ten o'clock in the morning he had fallen back about five miles and was in position on the banks of a ravine known to the Mexicans as the Resaca de Guerrero, distant between two and three miles from Matamoros. North of this ravine, and roughly parallel to it, was a similar ravine, known as the Resaca de la Palma. The road from Point Isabel, passing for the most part over an open prairie, enters, near Palo Alto, the growth of timber that fringes the course of the Rio Grande.

"This river," says Grant, "like the Mississippi, flows through a rich alluvial valley in the most meandering manner, running towards all points of the compass at times within a few miles. Formerly the river ran by Resaca de la Palma, some four or five miles east of the present channel. The old bed of the river at Resaca had become filled at places, leaving a succession of little lakes." [1]

At the spot where Arista made his stand such a succession of lakes, dry in early May, formed a curve, concave to the road by which the Americans must advance. To the right and left of this road was the almost impenetrable chaparral, which rendered cavalry useless and prevented artillery fire, except along the line of the road itself.

The battalion of *zapadores* and four battalions of infantry were stationed to the Mexican right, upon the front slope of the ravine, being protected up to their breasts by the natural intrenchment. Another battalion was in their rear, in reserve. On the left were stationed only the Tampico troops, with the various local bodies under command of General Canales, and two pieces of artillery, in reserve. Of the other guns, three were placed on the front edge of the ravine, and the rest in the rear of the ravine and to the right of the road. About two hundred yards farther back,

92–96; Meade, I, 78–80; Rea Bárcena's *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 35–37, 44–46; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra entre México y los E. U.*, 38–42. Taylor's detailed report of the battle, with subreports from his subordinates, will be found in Sen. Doc. 388, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 2–6, 13–23, and H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1102–1104. Arista's report is in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 562.

[1] Grant, I, 93.

in an open space, were the head-quarters, the cavalry, and the pack-mules. The horses were unsaddled, packs taken off the mules, fires lighted, and all preparations made for passing the night.

Taylor's army had been put in motion as soon as the retreat of the Mexicans was observed, and it marched as far as the Resaca de la Palma, where a halt was made. At the request of some of the senior officers Taylor called a council of war to consider the propriety of advancing, and after hearing their opinions, a majority of which were in favor of remaining strictly on the defensive, he determined to push forward. He took time, however, to make his preparations. The wounded were cared for, a temporary breastwork, armed with the two eighteen-pounders and two twelve-pounder guns that had been carried unmounted in the wagons, was thrown up for the protection of the train, a strong rear-guard was left behind, and the army resumed its march.

It had not proceeded far when messages came in from the skirmishers in front that the enemy were in force in a strong position. This must have been about four o'clock in the afternoon. At once the infantry were deployed in the thickets to the right and left and a battery was put in position on the road three hundred yards from the Mexican artillery. At about half past four the infantry skirmishers advanced as best they could through the chaparral, unseen by their opponents until they were upon them, and broken up into little groups without a semblance of order. The Mexican left was quickly driven back, but on their right the struggle continued for some time upon more even terms. Meanwhile, the Mexican artillery fire had somewhat slackened, and Taylor directed Captain May's squadron of dragoons to charge the Mexican guns.

May rode up to the American battery that was in action and shouted to Lieutenant Ridgely in command: "Where are they? I'm going to charge." Ridgely replied: "Hold on, Charlie, till I draw their fire." What happened next is best told in Ridgely's own words:

"I gave them a volley, and he most gallantly dashed forward in column of fours at the head of his squadron. I followed as quickly as possible, at a gallop, only halting when I came upon the edge of the ravine, where I found three pieces of artillery *but no cannoniers;* however, their infantry poured into me a most galling fire at from twenty-five to fifty paces and here ensued a most desperate struggle, but our infantry coming up, they were completely routed." [1]

The cavalry charge could only have occupied a very few moments. Sweeping down the narrow road and over the Mexican guns—"sab'ring the gunners there, charging an army"—the dragoons rode across the ravine to the rising ground in the rear; and then rallying what remained of them, May again charged the gunners who had regained their pieces, drove them off, and took prisoner General Vega, whom the dragoons brought back to the American lines as a token of their success.

By this time the Mexican line was falling into disorder. The eighth United States infantry regiment, left in the rear by Taylor to guard the train, had been sent for as soon as the action was fairly begun, and they came down the road at a charging pace. Joined by a portion of the fifth infantry, they swept down the road with Ridgely's battery, crossed the ravine, secured the abandoned Mexican guns, and completed the defeat of the enemy.

Arista, on his part, had been firmly convinced that Taylor would not venture to attack him that day. When reports reached him of the American advance, he insisted that it was a mere reconnoissance, and he remained writing in his tent until it had become evident that his army was defeated. At the head of his cavalry, which had not been engaged, he advanced as far as the ravine, where they came in contact with Ridgely's artillery before the latter could unlimber; but the American infantry, who by this time were lining the thickets on each side of the road, opened so terrible a fire that the Mexican cavalry were quickly driven back. The defeat became a rout. With the exception of a few corps, the Mexican army was broken into fragments,

[1] Sen. Doc. 388, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 21.

which fled as best they might. One squadron of the American dragoons which had not been engaged, both batteries of light artillery, and a small force of infantry were sent in pursuit and followed the scattered remnants of the Mexicans as far as the banks of the Rio Grande. As the pursuing forces came in sight of Matamoros the Mexican batteries opened fire. Fort Brown replied, and fired on such of the fugitives as crossed within range. In their headlong panic many of the Mexicans were drowned in crossing; but night fell and the remnants of the shattered and disorganized army were finally collected behind the fortifications of Matamoros.

Long before dark the main strength of the American army had been halted at the Mexican camp. They found the mules and their packs "arranged with great regularity on the ground," camp-fires lighted, and meals cooking. They captured Arista's personal baggage and public correspondence, five hundred mules and pack-saddles, hundreds of muskets, and all of the Mexican field artillery with its equipment and furniture. "The enemy," wrote Taylor, with an effective understatement, "has recrossed the river, and I am sure will not again molest us on this bank."[1]

The American loss in the battle of Resaca was thirty-nine killed and eighty-two wounded. The Mexican loss was officially reported at two hundred and sixty-two killed, three hundred and fifty-five wounded, and one hundred and eighty-five missing—a total of eight hundred and two, between six and seven times the American loss.[2] Taylor thought the Mexican figures too small. He estimated the Mexican dead on the two fields of battle at over three hundred. The number of the wounded and drowned were still more conjectural. Arista reported that he had thirty-five hundred men left in Matamoros, but this was probably an underestimate. He probably had four thousand, making his total loss from all causes during his fortnight's cam-

[1] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 296.
[2] Rivera, *Hist. de Jalapa*, III, 754.

paign twelve or thirteen hundred since he had crossed the Rio Grande.[1]

Had Taylor been fully aware of the demoralization in the Mexican ranks, he might perhaps have continued his pursuit at once across the river and utterly destroyed Arista's army; but he waited to make his preparations before attempting to take Matamoros. Arrangements for naval co-operation were made, and a crossing was effected at the rancho de la Burrita, about fifteen miles below the town in a straight line, and probably twice as far by the river. On the morning of May 18, Taylor's preparations were completed, and he began crossing his men in boats, protected by a strong force of artillery on the left bank.

He soon ascertained that Arista had abandoned Matamoros and was in full retreat. Once before, on the twelfth of May, the Mexican troops had marched out upon a rumor that the Americans were crossing. Arista subsequently declared that his men were in a state of panic and ready to run at the first sound, and as a last resort he sent a message to the American commander proposing an armistice until the two governments should finally settle the questions in dispute. From the point of view of the security of Taylor's army, the request was obviously inadmissible, and Taylor replied that an armistice was out of the question; that he had offered one to General Ampudia a month before, which had been declined; and that "circumstances were now changed."[2] The abandonment of the town then began immediately. Four hundred wounded were

[1] Accounts of the battle called by the Americans Resaca de la Palma, and by the Mexicans Resaca de Guerrero, are to be found in Ripley, I, 123–129; Henry, 94–100; Grant, I, 93–98; Meade, I, 80–83; Roa Bárcena, 37–39, 45–48; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 42–47. Taylor's detailed report, with subreports, is in Sen. Doc. 388, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 6–29, and H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1104–1106, and a further account by Gen. Taylor is contained in a personal letter to his son-in-law, Dr. R. C. Wood, in Taylor's *Letters from the Battlefields of the Mexican War*, 1–2. Reference may also be made to *Nuevo Bernal Díaz*, II, 16–20, for a letter from an inhabitant of Matamoros, who gives the version current in that town immediately after the battle.

[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, May 18, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 208. Taylor to Wood, May 19, 1846; Taylor's *Letters from the Battlefields*, 3–5.

left behind, with the officers' personal baggage and a large part of the supplies and munitions of war. Some of the guns were spiked; some were thrown into the river. There had been many desertions, but with his remaining men and eleven guns Arista struggled on for ten days through a barren country, his men almost famished, until he reached Linares, more than a hundred and fifty miles from the scene of his late disasters. There, a week later, he received an order relieving him from command and directing him to appear before a court-martial.[1]

By this time the news of Taylor's situation and his triumphant success had reached the United States. The first messenger despatched, on April 26, with the news of Arista's advance and the capture of Thornton's party of dragoons, got safely past the Mexican cavalry outposts, and on the ninth of May, only thirteen days from Matamoros, the information that "hostilities may now be considered as commenced" was in the hands of the War Department at Washington. It was the day of the battle of Resaca de la Palma. The cabinet on that same Saturday morning had been discussing the propriety of sending a message to Congress recommending a declaration of war in case, as the latest despatches seemed to indicate, the Mexicans should attack Taylor's forces. At about six in the evening General Jones, the adjutant-general of the army, handed Taylor's despatch to the President, and at a hastily summoned meeting of the cabinet it was at last definitely agreed that a warlike message should be sent to Congress on the Monday morning.[2]

With the valuable assistance of Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, the President during Sunday completed his message, which was duly delivered on Monday morning, the moment the two houses met. He began by referring to the claims of American citizens against Mexico as set forth in his annual message of the previous December, and

[1] See for accounts of the abandonment of Matamoros, Ros Bárcena, 48–50; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 47–51.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, I, 384–386.

to the sending of Slidell "with powers to adjust every existing difference." He described the arrival of Slidell at the city of Mexico, the refusal of Herrera's government to receive him, and the military revolution under the guidance of Paredes. "Determined to leave no effort untried to effect an amicable adjustment," the President said that he had directed Slidell to present his credentials once more to the Paredes government, but that he had met with a second refusal, conceived "in terms that may be considered as giving just grounds of offence to the government and people of the United States."

The President next referred to Taylor's advance. Congress had been informed in the annual message that an efficient military force had been ordered to take position between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The Texan government, he asserted, had exercised jurisdiction beyond the Nueces; the region between it and the Rio Grande was included in a congressional district, and a revenue officer, under the act of December 31, 1845, had been appointed to reside within it. The Rio Grande, the frontier of Texas, was exposed, and high military authority declared that on its banks were the "proper stations for the protecting forces of the government." Taylor's march, Ampudia's warlike proclamation, Arista's advance, and the affair with Thornton's party were next related.

"The grievous wrongs perpetrated by Mexico upon our citizens throughout a long period of years," the President continued, "remain unredressed; and solemn treaties, pledging her public faith for this redress, have been disregarded. A government either unable or unwilling to enforce the execution of such treaties, fails to perform one of its plainest duties. Our commerce with Mexico has been almost annihilated. It was formerly highly beneficial to both nations; but our merchants have been deterred from prosecuting it by the system of outrage and extortion which the Mexican authorities have pursued against them. . . . We have tried every effort at reconciliation. The cup of forbearance had been exhausted, even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon the American

soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war.

"As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon, by every consideration of duty and patriotism, to vindicate, with decision, the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country. . . . I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognise the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace. To this end I recommend that authority should be given to call into the public service a large body of volunteers, to serve for not less than six or twelve months, unless sooner discharged. . . . I further recommend that a liberal provision be made for sustaining our entire military force, and furnishing it with supplies and munitions of war. . . . In making these recommendations, I deem it proper to declare that it is my anxious desire, not only to terminate hostilities speedily, but to bring all matters in dispute between this government and Mexico to an early and amicable adjustment; and, in this view, I shall be prepared to renew negotiations, whenever Mexico shall be ready to receive propositions, or to make propositions of her own."

No popular assembly could have been expected to resist an appeal so skilful as this; but quite apart from anything the President might say, the country was deeply stirred by the public news that a superior force threatened attack on Taylor's detachment. The danger in which the little American army obviously stood was exaggerated by every device then known to the American press, beginning with New Orleans and running thence through the country. The White House on the Saturday night swarmed with congressmen, who, as the President did not omit to note, "were greatly excited at the news brought by the Southern mail from the army." The Committee on Military Affairs of the House met on Sunday and agreed on a bill to appropriate ten million dollars and to authorize the enlistment of fifty thousand volunteers. More congressmen called on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning to learn what the President meant to do, among them Benton, who said he did not believe the territory of the United States extended west of the Nueces, and declared himself unwilling to make an aggressive war on Mexico.[1]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 387–390.

On Monday afternoon, after the President's message was read in the House, there was little opposition, and what there was was roughly ridden over. A bill embodying the views of the Committee on Military Affairs was passed by a vote of 173 to 14 and sent to the Senate. The Senate, where methods were more deliberate, discussed the bill late on Monday afternoon and on Tuesday. The opposition, led by Calhoun, John M. Clayton, of Delaware, and Mangum, of North Carolina, rested principally on the declaration of the preamble that war existed by the act of Mexico, of which it was said there was no sufficient evidence.[1] Houston and Cass ridiculed these objections, citing the long-continued hostile course of the Mexican government in respect to Texas, its declaration that annexation would be regarded as an act of war, and its refusal to renew diplomatic relations. Ultimately the bill was passed, with minor amendments, by a vote of 42 to 2 (Davis, of Massachusetts, and Thomas Clayton, of Delaware), Calhoun and others not voting. The House sat that evening and at once concurred in the Senate's amendments. On Wednesday, the thirteenth of May, the bill became a law by the President's signature.

As finally passed, it recited that "by the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that government and the United States"; and it was thereupon enacted that for the purpose of enabling the government to prosecute the war to a speedy and successful termination the President was authorized to call for and accept the services of any number of volunteers, not exceeding fifty thousand, who might offer their services for twelve months or to the end of the war; and the sum of ten million dollars was appropriated for the purpose of carrying the provisions of the act into effect. The volunteers were to be subject to the rules and articles of war and were to be received in companies, battalions, squadrons, and regiments, whose officers

[1] Calhoun feared that the declaration of war might defeat "the arrangement of the Oregon question" and invite European interference, and that if not speedily settled the war would prove a great disaster.—(Calhoun to A. P. Calhoun, May 14, 1846, *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, II, 691.)

were to be appointed in the manner prescribed by law in the several states and territories. These bodies the President might organize into brigades and divisions; and he was authorized to apportion the staff, field, and general officers among the states and territories from which the volunteers came.

As soon as the action of Congress became known it was enthusiastically supported by the people and—somewhat less warmly—by the press of the United States. The newspapers were at first inclined to be critical and to question whether the story of the Mexican movements was not exaggerated, and whether the parties that had crossed the Rio Grande were acting under the orders of the Mexican government. But the popular feeling had no share in such doubts. Meetings were held, resolutions were adopted pledging the support of the people, volunteers poured in, and drilling was begun. "It has long been the fashion," says a recent historian, "to assert that the annexation of Texas was the cause of the Mexican war. No such delusion was held by the people in 1846."[1] Those who favored the war—probably a large majority of the people for the moment—believed that it was justified by the long-continued hostility of Mexico, her failure to settle American claims, and her refusal to negotiate for an adjustment of the matters in dispute.

The news of the outbreak of hostilities on the Rio Grande and of the response by the Congress and people of the United States to the President's appeal, reached London in the latter part of May. The Foreign Office had just before instructed Pakenham to settle the Oregon question substantially on the terms proposed by the United States. It would probably not have been too late to recall those orders had the government desired to do so; but, far from taking any steps in that direction, instructions were sent to the British minister in Mexico positively refusing to interfere in any manner, and also (what was more interesting) setting forth the opinion of the British government as to the

[1] McMaster, VII, 445–446.

course long pursued by Mexico. A copy of these instructions was sent to Pakenham in Washington.

"Within the last three years," Aberdeen wrote, "I have frequently had occasion to convey to you the opinions of Her Majesty's Govt. respecting the position of embarrassment and danger in which the line of policy long and unfortunately pursued by the Mexican Govt. with regard to Texas, and also to the United States, had placed Mexico; and the decision to which Her Majesty's Govt. had come on the subject of any assistance which might be requested of them, on behalf of Mexico, against the United States. . . .

"The more recent events which have occurred in Mexico are far from affording Her Majesty's Govt. any reasonable ground for departing from the line of policy which in 1844 they found it expedient to adopt. On the contrary they see in those events more and more cause for rigidly adhering to the system of non-interference which they then prescribed to themselves.

"Since that time the Annexation of Texas to the United States, which had long been foreseen and pointed out to the Govt. of Mexico by Her Majesty's Govt. and which the timely recognition of Texas by Mexico, so often insisted on by Great Britain, could alone have prevented, has been consummated; and the further encroachment of the United States on the Mexican Territory, which was equally foretold by Her Majesty's Govt., has been realised. Meantime Mexico, although menaced, and now indeed, as we learn, actually engaged in hostilities, on her Texan Frontier, has been precluded by her internal dissentions and the penury of her finances from effectually providing against the emergency in which She is involved. . . .

"Were Great Britain to interfere in that quarrel, She would involve herself in a war with the United States; and not only that, but She must necessarily play the part, not merely of an auxiliary, but of a principal, in such war; that is, She would find herself engaged in a war with a Nation with which She would have no personal cause of quarrel, in behalf of a Nation and Govt. which She has repeatedly warned in the most friendly and urgent manner of their danger, and which, solely in consequence of their wilful contempt of that warning, have at last plunged headlong down the precipice from which the British Govt. spared no efforts to save them.

"I state these circumstances not by way of reproach, for reproach is now useless, but solely in order to enable you to place more clearly before the eyes of the President Paredes, if he be still Chief Magistrate, the real state of the case without disguise, and to point out to him in a palpable shape the true position of Great Britain, and the reasons for which Her Majesty's Govt. must necessarily decline to come forward in support of Mexico against the United States.

"In making known this decision, however, which you will do in explicit but courteous terms, and accompanied by an assurance of the sincere regret which Her Majesty's Govt. feel in being compelled to take this course, you will at the same time declare to the President, or the Secretary of State, that Her Majesty's Govt. will always be found perfectly willing and desirous to give Mexico every proof in their power of their earnest wish to save her, as far as it may yet be possible, by friendly interposition, from the fatal consequences of the policy which her successive Govts. have for many years past been so unfortunately induced to pursue towards Texas and the United States." [1]

[1] Aberdeen to Bankhead, June 1, 1846; *British Foreign Office Archives MSS.* Acknowledgments are due to Professor Adams, of Stanford University, for a complete copy of this important paper, a part of which he has printed in his work, *British Interests and Activities in Texas.*

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE OCCUPATION OF CALIFORNIA

Long before the outbreak of actual hostilities President Polk had had an eager eye upon California. The seizure of that outlying portion of Mexican territory was so easy an operation for a naval power that it could never have been overlooked in any consideration of possible warfare, and it is therefore not at all surprising that as early as June, 1845, instructions were sent to the commodore commanding the Pacific squadron requiring him to act promptly if the emergency should arise.

The situation was regarded as critical. Mexico, early in March of that year, had broken off diplomatic negotiations with the United States, and had proclaimed her intention of maintaining and upholding her rights in Texas, of which, she asserted, she had been unjustly despoiled. From Parrott, the secret agent of the United States, came information that war seemed to be the desire of all parties, and that preparations for war were in progress,[1] while the Texan government at the same time expressed their fears of a new invasion.[2] Donelson, the American chargé d'affaires in Texas, was even more emphatic, reporting the presence of seven thousand Mexican troops on the Rio Grande, ready to advance the moment annexation was seen to be imminent, and expressing the opinion that war with Mexico was "inevitable."[3]

The receipt of this last news in Washington was at once followed by orders to General Taylor to be ready to march from Natchitoches, and by orders to Captain Stockton,

[1] W. S. Parrett to Buchanan, April 26 and May 22, 1845; *State Dept. MSS.*
[2] Allen to Donelson, May 19, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 61.
[3] Donelson to Buchanan, June 4, 1845; *ibid.*, 66.

the senior officer of the navy on the coast of Texas, to cooperate in moving the American troops.[1] To Commodore Conner, at Pensacola, orders were sent a few days later directing him to show his force—"perhaps the largest fleet that ever sailed under the American flag"—before the Mexican ports, and, in case Mexico should declare war, to dislodge her troops from any post she might have east of the mouth of the Rio Grande, to take possession of Tampico, and, if possible, to take the castle of San Juan de Ulúa.[2]

On the twenty-fourth of June, 1845, "secret and confidential" orders were also sent to Commodore John D. Sloat, commanding the United States naval forces in the Pacific, calling his attention to "the present aspect of the relations between this country and Mexico." It was the earnest desire of the President, he was told, to pursue the policy of peace, and Sloat was therefore directed to be "assiduously careful" to avoid anything that looked like aggression. If, however, the Mexican government should declare war, he was to act with vigor.

"The Mexican ports on the Pacific," said the Secretary of the Navy, "are said to be open and defenceless. If you ascertain with certainty that Mexico has declared war against the United States, you will at once possess yourself of the port of San Francisco, and blockade or occupy such other ports as your force may permit.

"Yet, even if you should find yourself called upon by the certainty of an express declaration of war against the United States to occupy San Francisco and other Mexican ports, you will be careful to preserve, if possible, the most friendly relations with the inhabitants; and, where you can do so, you will encourage them to adopt a course of neutrality."[3]

Having thus provided for the seizure of California in the event of war, the Navy Department for the next four months did nothing further, beyond making arrangements for strengthening Sloat's squadron; but on the seventeenth

[1] Buchanan to Donelson, June 15, 1845; *ibid.*, 42.
[2] Bancroft to Conner, July 11, 1845; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 232.
[3] Bancroft to Sloat, June 24, 1845; *ibid.*, 231.

of October, 1845, both the State and Navy Departments awoke to sudden activity in relation to California. There was nothing in the general aspect of public affairs to lead to any immediate action. Only the day before, the Secretary of War had written to General Taylor that "the information which we have here, renders it probable that no serious attempts will, at present, be made by Mexico to invade Texas."[1] The cabinet a month before had decided to ask, through the American consul in Mexico, whether an American diplomatic agent would be received, and they were hopefully awaiting a favorable answer. The sole reason for giving instructions concerning California just at this time, was because the United States frigate *Congress*, bound to the Pacific, was reported to be ready for sea at Norfolk.

The fact that any such instructions were sent was a carefully guarded secret. To Commodore Stockton, commanding the *Congress*, sealed orders were given, not to be opened till the ship should be "without the Capes of Virginia," under which he was directed to proceed to the Pacific, where his ship was ultimately to form part of Commodore Sloat's squadron. But he was, in the first place, to make the best of his way to the Sandwich Islands, where he was to land his passengers—the American commissioner and the consul to Hawaii, with their families.

"When you have finished your duties at the Sandwich Islands," the sealed orders continued, "you will sail directly for Monterey, and in person, or by a perfectly trustworthy hand, deliver the enclosed letter to our Consul at that place. You will confer with the Consul, gain all the information you can on Mexican affairs, and do all in your power to conciliate the good feeling of the people of that place towards the United States. On leaving Monterey, you will join the squadron of Commodore Sloat."[2]

The letter to Larkin, the American consul at Monterey, which Stockton was charged to deliver with such unusual

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Oct. 16, 1845; *Ibid.*, 89.
[2] Bancroft to Stockton, Oct. 17, 1845; Richman, *California*, 528, 530.

precautions, was written by the Secretary of State and bore the same date as the orders to Stockton. After thanking the consul for the information he had furnished respecting California, and referring to the "anxious solicitude" of the government and people of the United States concerning the future destiny of that country, Buchanan proceeded to explain the policy of the United States in terms which future events by no means justified.

"In the contest between Mexico and California," he said, "we can take no part, unless the former should commence hostilities against the United States; but should California assert and maintain her independence, we shall render her all the kind offices in our power, as a sister Republic. This Government has no ambitious aspirations to gratify and no desire to extend our federal system over more territory than we already possess, unless by the free and spontaneous wish of the independent people of adjoining territories. The exercise of compulsion or improper influence to accomplish such a result would be repugnant both to the policy and principles of this Government. But whilst these are the sentiments of the President, he could not view with indifference the transfer of California to Great Britain or any other European Power. . . .

"On all proper occasions you should not fail prudently to warn the Government and people of California of the danger of such an interference to their peace and prosperity; to inspire them with a jealousy of European dominion, and to arouse in their bosoms that love of liberty and independence so natural to the American Continent. Whilst I repeat that this government does not, under existing circumstances, intend to interfere between Mexico and California, it would vigorously interpose to prevent the latter from becoming a British or French Colony. In this they might surely expect the aid of the Californians themselves.

"Whilst the President will make no effort and use no influence to induce California to become one of the free and independent States of this Union, yet if the people should desire to unite their destiny with ours, they would be received as brethren, whenever this can be done without affording Mexico just cause of complaint. . . .

"In addition to your Consular functions, the President has thought proper to appoint you a confidential agent in California; and you may consider the present despatch as your authority for acting in this character. The confidence which he reposes in your patriotism and discretion is evinced by conferring upon you this delicate and important trust. You will take care not to awaken the jealousy of the French

and English agents there by assuming any other than your Consular character. Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie of the Marine Corps will immediately proceed to Monterey, and will probably reach you before this despatch. He is a gentleman in whom the President reposes entire confidence. He has seen these instructions and will cooperate as a confidential agent with you, in carrying them into execution." [1]

On the same seventeenth of October orders were sent to Commodore Sloat, which varied in one important particular from the orders of the previous June. Instead of telling him to seize the Californian ports if he ascertained "with certainty" that Mexico had declared war, he was told that "in the event of actual hostilities," he was to dispose of his whole force "so as to carry out most effectually the objects specified in the instructions forwarded to you from the Department in view of such a contingency." [2]

In preparing these instructions the cabinet at Washington was acting upon information which, as we now know, was in a measure erroneous. It was not true that California was trying to throw off her connection with Mexico, or that there was any "contest" going on between them, or that her people wanted anything more than a sort of home rule in purely local affairs. Nor was it true that either the British or the French government designed taking California. But the American authorities cannot be justly criticised for relying upon information which came to them from their consul in California, and which corresponded with so much else that reached them.

But whatever the real hopes and wishes of the administration in respect to the Californians may have been, the instructions to Larkin outlined a policy which was at least perfectly clear and consistent. The President and his advisers hoped that war would not come. They hoped to be able to buy California, which was the great object they were now aiming at; and they hoped to get it by the cooperation and with the good-will of the inhabitants. If the

[1] Buchanan to Larkin, Oct. 17, 1845; Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 275–277.
[2] Bancroft to Sloat, Oct. 17, 1845; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 537.

Californians could be induced to declare themselves independent of Mexico while negotiations (which might be long protracted) were going on, so much the better. But, on the other hand, war might occur, and in that case the ports were to be instantly seized, while the good-will and friendship of the inhabitants were still to be sedulously cultivated. The Americans, in the event of war, were to come as liberators, as defenders against Mexican oppression, and in no event as conquerors. And all this was to be conducted with such secrecy as to give no excuse to European nations to intervene.

It was evident, of course, that these important instructions to Larkin at Monterey and to Sloat at Mazatlan could not reach them by way of Cape Horn and the Sandwich Islands for many months to come, and for this reason Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, of the United States marine corps, was sent to California by way of Mexico, carrying duplicates of the despatches, and charged also, as he subsequently gave it to be understood, with important verbal communications. The orders to Sloat he delivered; but the instructions to Larkin he committed to memory on the voyage to Vera Cruz, and then destroyed the paper. His memory proved to be exact, for when his version of the instructions was written out in Monterey it differed only in unimportant details from the original, which was later delivered by Stockton.[1]

Gillespie, it seems, in addition to carrying instructions to Larkin and co-operating with him in the development of the President's peaceable policy in California, was also to carry a message to a much more picturesque agent of the United States—Captain John Charles Frémont, of the corps of topographical engineers, who was supposed, when Gillespie left Washington, to be somewhere on the Pacific coast.

The son of a Frenchman from Lyons, who had married a

[1] Probably the reason why the despatch to Sloat was preserved by Gillespie and carried through Mexico, while the despatch to Larkin was committed to memory and destroyed, was because Sloat had a cipher code, while Larkin (like most consuls) had none.

lady of good family in Virginia, Captain Frémont was born in Savannah, Georgia, January 21, 1813. Through the influence of Poinsett, young Frémont was appointed teacher of mathematics on the sloop-of-war *Natchez* about 1836. He subsequently became a railroad surveyor, in which capacity he surveyed a good deal of wild country. In Van Buren's administration Frémont, again under Poinsett's influence, was appointed a second lieutenant in the corps of topographical engineers and was sent to make explorations in the region between the upper Missouri River and the Canadian frontier. From these expeditions he returned to Washington, where he was employed in preparing the reports of these explorations; and while there, he met and married one of the daughters of Senator Benton, of Missouri.

Not long after this lucky marriage President Tyler's administration determined to send out an expedition to explore the Rocky Mountains, with a view to improving the means of communication with Oregon, a subject that was attracting much attention, and Frémont was appointed to command it.[1] He set out from St. Louis early in June, returning on October 17, 1842. His route was that which had been followed for years by the Oregon trappers and emigrants up the north branch of the Platte River, past Fort Laramie to the South Pass, and then on by the western slopes of the Wind River Mountains. The value of the expedition consisted not in the discovery of a new country, but in the accurate surveys which Frémont made of regions never before correctly mapped, and in the lively and interesting account which he gave of the scenes through which he passed.

Having completed his report, Frémont in the summer of 1843 was again on the march for the West. Keeping to the southward of his former route, he explored the country

[1] See his report in Sen. Doc. 174, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 9–79. Frémont's training and experience, of course, made him a perfectly suitable person for appointment to the command of this expedition, but there is some evidence that political considerations and a desire to get Benton's support in the Senate had a good deal to do with his selection.—(Tyler's *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II, 292.) Tyler, however, never succeeded in winning Benton's support.

now served by the Union Pacific Railway as far west as Fort Steele, from which point he turned north and struck and followed the well-known Oregon trail, diverging to visit the Great Salt Lake. He came back from the lake to the Snake River, and, reaching Oregon in the autumn, went as far down the Columbia as Fort Vancouver, where he connected his surveys with those of Captain Wilkes's naval exploring expedition.

Leaving the Oregon settlements late in November, 1843, he went in a southeasterly direction and followed the easterly base of the Sierra Nevada. He was there between an almost waterless desert and an inhospitable range of mountains; and after suffering severe hardships, he determined to turn west to California, hoping to find the River Buenaventura, which was laid down on the maps of that period as flowing westerly into San Francisco Bay. Of course no such river existed, but Frémont finally succeeded in the astonishing feat of leading his party across the Sierra Nevada in the very dead of winter, reaching Sutter's Fort early in March, 1844. After resting nearly three weeks at New Helvetia and obtaining much-needed supplies, Frémont and his band set out for the south. Travelling up the San Joaquin valley, they crossed the mountains in April, struck and followed the well-known Spanish trail from Los Angeles, reached Utah Lake at the end of May and Bent's Fort, on the Arkansas River, on the first of July, and were back in St. Louis on August 6, 1844.

In the summer of 1845 Frémont started upon his third and final government expedition, with a larger party than ever before. He left the borders of civilization in May or June, went up the Arkansas River to its source, somewhere about the modern Leadville, and then struck across to Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake. By the end of October his party had travelled through a considerable part of what is now Nevada, and was encamped in Mexican territory, at Walker Lake, in the western part of that state. There they divided, and by different routes proceeded across the Sierra Nevada.

About the middle of January, 1846, Frémont, with a few of his men (the whereabouts of the rest being still unknown to him), went to Sutter's Fort, and from there he went by water to San Francisco Bay and to Monterey. From San Francisco he wrote to his wife, giving an account of his journey from the Great Salt Lake. "I am now going," he wrote, "on business to see some gentlemen on the coast, and will then join my people, and complete our survey in this part of the world as rapidly as possible. . . . So soon as the proper season comes, and my animals are rested, we turn our faces homeward, and be sure that grass will not grow under our feet."[1]

Of his visit to Monterey he writes:

"I had come to Monterey with the object of obtaining leave to bring my party into the settlements in order to refit and obtain the supplies that had now become necessary. All the camp equipment, the clothes of the men and their saddles and horse gear, were either used up or badly in want of repair. The next morning I made my official visits. I found the Governor, Don Pio Pico, absent at Los Angeles. With Mr. Larkin I called upon the commanding general Don José Castro, the prefect, alcalde, and ex-Governor Alvarado. I informed the general and the other officers that I was engaged in surveying the nearest route from the United States to the Pacific Ocean. I informed them farther that the object of the survey was geographical, being under the direction of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers to which corps I belonged; and that it was made in the interest of science and of commerce, and that the men composing the party were citizens and not soldiers. The permission asked for was readily granted, and during the two days I stayed I was treated with every courtesy by the general and other officers."[2]

The records confirm Frémont's recollection as to his visits and explanations, but it is not true that permission was granted to bring his party into the settlements. On the contrary, after Frémont had verbally explained his situation the prefect, Manuel Castro, addressed a formal letter to the American consul to inquire the purpose for which American troops had entered the department and their leader had come to Monterey. Larkin replied in

[1] Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 432. [2] *Ibid.*, 454.

writing, by Frémont's authority, that the latter had come under the orders of his government to survey a practicable route to the Pacific; that he had left his company of fifty hired men, not soldiers, on the frontier of the department to rest themselves and their animals; that he had come to Monterey to obtain clothing and money; and that when his men were rested he intended to continue his journey to Oregon. The Mexican authorities made no objection at the time, but reported to the central government.[1]

Somewhere about the twentieth of February Frémont, having collected all his men at a vacant ranch not far from what is now the site of Lick Observatory, in Santa Clara County, started upon his march; but instead of going toward Oregon, as he had told the consul he would do, he marched across country and came down to the shores of the Pacific near Santa Cruz, the northerly point of the Bay of Monterey. From there he continued southerly along the shore, and then up the valley of the Salinas, not far from Monterey. His reason for this eccentric movement, as he later explained, was because he wanted to find a seaside home for his mother.[2]

He had, of course, no sort of authority for moving his men into the settled part of the country, and his action was entirely contrary to his representations made to the Mexican authorities. The latter had tacitly agreed to permit Frémont and his men to remain in the uninhabited parts of California on the San Joaquin River, under the belief that they would soon go from there to Oregon. Even this was a considerable stretch of the very definite laws of Mexico, which prohibited foreigners from coming into the country or travelling about in it without passports; for it was the extraordinary fact that Frémont had come without passports, and without notification to the Mexican gov-

[1] Bancroft, *California*, V, 2–6.

[2] Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 457. He may have had other motives, such as to go to Santa Barbara for supplies he expected there, or to survey a line for a railroad.—(R. W. Kelsey, "The U. S. Consulate in California," *Pub. of the Academy of Pac. Coast History*, vol. I, No. 5, 96–97, where this whole subject is discussed with some fulness and copious references.)

ernment. That diplomatic relations had been suspended no doubt explains the omission. However, the law had in effect been waived at the request of the American consul, but only to a limited extent. José Castro, the *comandante general*, was therefore entirely within his rights in sending, as he did, a message to Frémont, on March 5, 1846, in which he stated that he had just been informed that the party had entered the settlements of the department, and "this being prohibited by our laws, I find myself obliged to notify you that on the receipt of this you must immediately retire beyond the limits of the Department, such being the orders of the Supreme Government." Frémont sent back a verbal refusal to obey and moved his camp to the summit of the Gavilan Peak, where he began to build a log fort and hoisted the flag of the United States almost within sight of Monterey.

To Larkin, the American consul, Frémont's movements were altogether incomprehensible. He wrote to Frémont on March 8, enclosing correspondence with the local authorities.

"It is not for me," he said, "to point out to you your line of conduct; you have your instructions from the government; my knowledge of your character obliges me to believe you will follow them; you are of course taking every care and safeguard to protect your men, but not knowing your actual situation and the people who surround you, your care may prove insufficient. . . . Your encamping so near the town has caused much excitement. The natives are firm in the belief that they will break you up and that you can be entirely destroyed by their power. In all probability they will attack you; the result either way may cause trouble hereafter to resident Americans."[1]

On the next day Larkin wrote letters to John Parrott, the American consul at Mazatlan, and to the naval officer in command, explaining the critical state of affairs, and requesting that a man-of-war be sent to California with the least possible delay; and another to the Secretary of State

[1] Larkin to Frémont, March 8, 1846; Bancroft, *California*, V, 12. Orders from Mexico seem to have been received in Monterey censuring the local authorities for allowing Frémont to winter in California, and directing them to expel him—by force, if necessary.

advising him of what had been done.[1] Frémont blustered a good deal about dying under the flag and trusting to his country to avenge his death, but he lost little time in retreating to the eastward, and by the twenty-first of March he was again at Sutter's Fort.

The Californian authorities were of course jubilant when Castro issued a proclamation declaring that Frémont, "at the sight of two hundred patriots, abandoned the camp which he occupied, leaving in it some clothing and other war material," and intimating that this was due to the cowardice of Frémont and his men—an assertion which was not calculated to improve the relations between the two parties.

Writing to his wife about the affair on the first of April, Frémont stated he then expected to start for home the middle of May.

"The Spaniards," he said, "were somewhat rude and inhospitable below and ordered us out of the country after having given me permission to winter there. My sense of duty did not permit me to fight them, but we retired slowly and growlingly before a force of three or four hundred men and three pieces of artillery. Without a shadow of a cause, the Governor suddenly raised the whole country against us, issuing a false and scandalous proclamation. Of course I did not dare to compromise the United States, against which appearances would have been strong; but though it was in my power to increase my party by many Americans, I refrained from committing a solitary act of hostility or impropriety. For my own part I have become disgusted with everything belonging to the Mexicans."[2]

Moving slowly north from Sutter's Fort, Frémont and his party were encamped on the eighth of May on the western shore of Klamath Lake, in Oregon, when they were joined by two Americans from Sutter's Fort, who rode into camp with the news that a United States officer was two days behind with despatches, protected by a small escort, and probably in great danger from the Indians. On the next morning Frémont took nine of his men, and with the

[1] See copies in Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 462–469.
[2] Frémont to Mrs. Frémont, April 1, 1846; Bancroft, *California*, V, 21.

two who had brought him the news rode back twenty-five miles and met Lieutenant Gillespie near the outlet of the lake. Again it was the eventful day of Resaca de la Palma.

There were now sixteen men in all in the camp, and as they thought the Indians in the neighborhood were friendly no watch was kept. Just before midnight, however, the camp was attacked by savages, and before the attack was repulsed three men were killed. Next morning Frémont and the survivors started back to join the main body of his party. His first care was to undertake a punitive expedition. He determined to avenge the attack on his camp, and to strike the Indians a blow which should "make them realize that Castro was far and I was near"; although what Castro had to do with the midnight assault nobody ever knew. Several villages were therefore attacked and a number of Indians miscellaneously killed. This Frémont called "a rude but necessary measure to prevent injury to the whites."[1]

Having thus taken revenge, the whole party next went south and reached the American settlements on the Sacramento River, north of Sutter's, by May 24, 1846. During these two weeks Frémont had ample opportunity to consider and digest the information which was brought to him by Lieutenant Gillespie.

Gillespie had not left Washington until about the first of November, 1845, and a day or two before that he had called upon the President to take leave.

"I held a confidential conversation," the President wrote, "with Lieut. Gillespie of the Marine Corps, about 8 O'Clock P. M., on the subject of a secret mission on which he was about to go to California. His secret instructions & the letter to Mr. Larkin, U. S. Consul at Monterey, in the Department of State, will explain the object of his mission."[2]

The "secret instructions" must have been verbal, for none have ever been discovered in the records at Washing-

[1] See "The Conquest of California," *Century Magazine* (April, 1891), XLI, 924; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 493–496.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, I, 83 (Oct. 30, 1845).

ton. All the papers which Gillespie took with him for California were a duplicate of Buchanan's instruction to Larkin of October 17, personal letters of introduction from Buchanan to Larkin and Frémont, and a package of family letters from Senator Benton and Mrs. Frémont. The letters to Larkin have been published; the letters to Frémont have not, although it was upon these that Frémont relied to justify his subsequent conduct. In all the numerous and contradictory explanations which Frémont afterward gave, he always referred to Benton's letters; and he seems to have intended to account for their non-production by saying that they were in a sort of family cipher which would mean nothing to others, although to him, conversant as he was with the principal figures in Washington, they had a world of meaning.[1]

Nevertheless, it is possible to guess, with some degree of probability, what were really the contents of Benton's letters. On October 24, 1845, Benton had called at the White House by invitation. He was not at that time a frequent visitor. He had been opposed to Polk's nomination, and it was only with reluctance that he had supported him on the stump. Indeed, the President seems not to have spoken to him for some months before. He now sent for Benton, solely for the purpose of discussing the Oregon question. "His manner and conversation," the President noted with apparent surprise, "were altogether pleasant and friendly, and such as they had always been in former years when I was in Congress with him." After discussing Oregon at some length,

"the conversation then turned on California on which I remarked that Great Brittain had her eye on that country and intended to possess it if she could, but that the people of the U. S. would not willingly permit California to pass into the possession of any new colony planted by Great Brittain or any foreign monarchy, and that in reasserting Mr. Monroe's doctrine I had California & the fine Bay of San Francisco as much in view as Oregon. Col. Benton agreed that no Foreign Power ought to be permitted to colonise California. . . . Some conversation occurred concerning Capt. Fremont's expedition, and his in-

[1] Royce's *California*, 116.

tention to visit California before his return. Col. B. expressed the opinion that Americans would settle on the Sacraminto River and ultimately hold the country. The conversation on the subject of Foreign Colonization closed by a general remark that no new Foreign Colony could be permitted on any part of the North American Continent, on which there seemed to be an agreement."[1]

This explanation of the President's Monroe doctrine policy, and some speculations as to the intentions of European nations and the probabilities of war with England or Mexico, or both, must have made up the staple of Benton's information. He was not otherwise in the President's confidence.

Gillespie himself never threw any light on his "secret orders." Before a committee of Congress Frémont testified that Gillespie's orders required him "to ascertain the disposition of the Californian people, to conciliate their feelings in favor of the United States, and to find out, with a design of counteracting, the designs of the British Government upon that country."[2] If to this, which was a mere paraphrase of the instructions to Larkin, we add further orders to confer with Frémont in case he was still in California, and to inform him of the existing state of affairs and of the instructions sent to Larkin, we may feel pretty confident that we have the whole of Gillespie's mission.

Frémont was accustomed in his later days to say that Gillespie brought official information of war with Mexico. The fact was that when Gillespie left Washington, and for more than two months afterward, the President and his cabinet were extremely hopeful of a peaceful solution through Slidell's efforts, and therefore from that quarter he could have brought no official news except news of peace.

Gillespie had reached the city of Mexico in December, 1845, and was delayed there for some time by the Paredes revolt, which rendered it impossible to get across to the Pacific. Early in the new year, however, he did manage—travelling under his own name, but in the character of a merchant in search of health and amusement—to get to

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 68–72. [2] H. R. Report 817, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 3–4.

Mazatlan, where he made himself known to Commodore Sloat and begged for a passage to Monterey, but he told Sloat nothing of his mission.[1] Sloat sent him on the sloop-of-war *Cyane* by way of the Sandwich Islands, and he arrived at last at his destination on April 17, 1846, six months to a day after the date of the instructions which he was charged to convey to the American consul. The original of these instructions, it will be remembered, was on board the United States ship *Congress*, which at this time was lying at Callao on her leisurely journey to California.

Gillespie, who had, of course, picked up some warlike rumors in Mexico, though nothing definite so early as March, stayed two days at Monterey with Larkin, and then set out for San Francisco Bay and Sutter's Fort, where he arrived on the twenty-eighth of April. He then secured men and horses and went on to overtake Frémont, whom he joined, as has been seen, on the ninth of May, and with whom he turned back down the Sacramento valley.[2]

As soon as Frémont got back into the more or less settled parts of the valley he wrote to Benton, giving a short account of his meeting with Gillespie, and saying he had *received nothing* from Buchanan, although Benton's letter had led him to expect a communication. He himself would now proceed directly homeward by way of the Colorado, but would not reach the frontier till September.[3]

This letter he enclosed to Larkin, the American consul in Monterey, requesting him to forward it via Mazatlan, and promising to write more at length soon. But Gillespie, by the same messenger—Neale, one of the men who had gone with him to overtake Frémont—wrote fully to Larkin from

[1] Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 532, 537. Sloat, on March 17, 1846, acknowledged the receipt of the orders of Oct. 17, 1845, of which Gillespie doubtless brought a duplicate.

[2] The subject of Gillespie's "secret mission" has been much discussed by Californian historians. Reference may be made to Royce's *California*, 129-150; Bancroft, *California*, V, 26-29, 85-89; Richman, 307-312, *notes* 33 and 39. Frémont's own latest versions are printed in his *Memoirs*, 489-490, and in the article entitled "The Conquest of California," published in the *Century Magazine* for April, 1891, XLI, 917-923.

[3] Full text in Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 499. Italics in the original.

"Peter Lubin's house" of his own adventures since leaving Monterey and of Frémont's plans.

"Fremont and I," he related, "came here leaving the Camp very much worn out, fifteen miles above. We have been living upon Horse-meat for some eight days without flour. There was too much snow upon the mountains to cross. He now goes home from here. I send this messenger to get such news as you have and to give us some information in relation to the vessels of war—where they are and whether the Congress has arrived. . . . Neal will give you all the news about our travel, to whom I must refer you. . . . I shall go immediately to Yerba Buena."[1]

Larkin received these letters late on the evening of May 31. To Frémont he wrote, wishing him "a speedy, safe, and pleasant journey to our Capital," sending him some New York and New Orleans newspapers, and thanking him for former offers of service in Washington, which he said he would not claim at that time. To Buchanan, Larkin wrote, giving an account of the movements of Frémont and Gillespie as reported by the latter, and saying that "Captain Freemont now starts for the States."[2]

As stated in his letter to Larkin, Gillespie had previously arranged with Frémont to go down the Sacramento River to Yerba Buena (San Francisco), the purpose being to try to get supplies from some American man-of-war; and though they did not know whether any such vessel was to be met with, Frémont drew up and signed a letter to Gillespie containing a list of what was wanted, and saying that if these articles could be got from "our Squadron" it would "materially aid the surveys with which I am charged and very much expedite my return to the States."[3] What he said he needed was lead, powder, percussion-caps, sugar, coffee, tea, pork, tobacco, medicines, and other things that might very well be useful to an exploring expedition. They might also be useful in a raid on the Mexican villages.

[1] Frémont to Larkin; Gillespie to Larkin, May 24, 1846; *Bancroft Collection* (Univ. of California) *MSS.*
[2] Larkin to Frémont, May 31, 1846; Larkin to Buchanan, June 1, 1846; *Ibid.*
[3] See text in Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 504.

Leaving Frémont encamped on the Sacramento at the mouth of the Feather River (some fifteen miles above Sutter's settlement), Gillespie reached San Francisco Bay by boat about the eighth of June and found the United States sloop-of-war *Portsmouth*, Commander Montgomery, at anchor at Yerba Buena. The *Portsmouth* had been detached by Commodore Sloat as soon as he received Larkin's letter of March 9 telling of the prospects of a fight between Frémont and the Mexicans. She had reached Monterey on April 22, and her surprised commander then learned from the consul that the country had been quiet for six months past, and that Castro's menaces against Frémont were intended only as a basis for high-flown despatches to Mexico! After nine days at Monterey the *Portsmouth* had come to San Francisco, bringing Neale on his way back to Sutter's with Larkin's letter to Frémont.

Before Gillespie's arrival Captain Montgomery had written to Frémont asking whether he could be of any service;[1] and therefore, when Gillespie did come, having crossed Montgomery's messenger (Neale) on the way, Montgomery was very ready to furnish him with all that was asked, and also to lend, at Gillespie's suggestion, fifteen hundred dollars in money.[2]

It is hard to read this mass of correspondence without feeling convinced that Frémont, at least up to the time Gillespie left him to go to the coast—that is, up to about the twenty-eighth of May—was resolved to go back to the United States. He did, indeed, talk of going to Santa Barbara and of returning home by way of the Colorado River; but while such a journey involved a sort of Donnybrook invitation to Castro, it did not apparently contemplate a deliberate attack on the Mexicans.[3]

That Gillespie's persuasions, or his information concern-

[1] Montgomery to Frémont, June 3, 1846; *ibid.*, 518.

[2] Gillespie to Montgomery, June 9, 1846; *ibid.*, 504. See also Montgomery to Frémont, June 10, 1846; *ibid.*, 519.

[3] There is some evidence that he had in the previous February ordered supplies to be sent for him to Santa Barbara. See Kelsey's *U. S. Consulate in California*, 95.

ing the state of affairs with Mexico, falling on the vain and egotistical mind of Frémont, were the cause of his movements up to this date is hardly open to doubt; and the chief argument which the tempter used seems likely to have been the necessity Frémont was under of giving a proof of his courage to the world. It was at any rate prominently put forward in Frémont's first explanation.

"You will remember," he wrote to Benton, "how grossly outraged and insulted we had already been by this officer (Castro); many in my own camp, and throughout the country, thought that I should not have retreated in March last. I felt humiliated and humbled; one of the main objects proposed by this expedition had been entirely defeated, and it was the opinion of the officers of the squadron (so I was informed by Mr. Gillespie) that I could not again retreat consistently with any military reputation."[1]

His first idea, therefore, seems to have been to march the whole length of California, so as to give Castro an opportunity of attacking him; and this he conceived to be a compliance with the distinct orders of the United States government to use every effort to conciliate the inhabitants of the country! But in the absence of positive contemporaneous evidence it is only possible to form more or less plausible conjectures as to Frémont's state of mind at this time. What his intentions soon afterward became is certain.

The American settlers up and down the Sacramento valley were a rough and ignorant set of frontiersmen, suspicious, afraid alike of the Indians and the "Spaniards," and ready to believe and act on the most absurd rumors. There was, however, in the spring of 1846 a basis of solid fact for their suspicions. First of all, Frémont and his men were seen retreating before the Mexicans, who were said to have driven them from the neighborhood of Monterey. Then American and British ships of war were coming and going on the coast. Gillespie, an American officer, appeared and set off in hot haste after Frémont; and finally, after an interval, he returned in company with Frémont and all his men.

[1] Frémont to Benton, July 25, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 545.

What, the settlers might naturally ask, did all this mean? The meaning would hardly have mattered if the settlers had felt confident of their own status; but even the most ignorant must have known that they were residing in California in open defiance of Mexican laws, that they had no title to their lands, and that they never could acquire title without at least becoming Mexican citizens. The law on the subject was perfectly well known and had been repeatedly called to public attention.

Thus in July, 1845, the Governor of California was instructed to issue "the most positive orders" against the migration of American families "from the Missouri and Columbia." The orders were duly issued, but as no attempt was ever made to enforce them the immigrants came faster than ever.[1] In April, 1846, Manuel Castro, the prefect at Monterey, reiterated the warnings so often given before, by issuing a sort of proclamation, copies of which were sent to subprefects, alcaldes, consuls, consular agents, and others.

"Being informed," ran this document, "that a multitude of foreigners, taking advantage of our local circumstances, without having come with the requisites provided by law, are residing in the district, and that many of them who should not even be admitted into this country have taken possession of real property well-knowing the law on this subject, I have concluded to instruct all judges in charge of settlements that they cannot, without incurring great responsibility, permit or authorize any sale or cession whatever of land, or of said class of property, except in accordance with law and in favor of Mexican citizens; advising the foreigners who are not naturalized and legally in the country that whatever purchase or acquisition they may make of land will be null and void; and that these persons will be subject, unless they retire voluntarily from the country, to be expelled from it whenever the Government may find it convenient."[2]

This paper, which was perhaps seen by some of the settlers, and heard of in an inaccurate and garbled form by many more, was a mild and accurate statement of unques-

[1] Cuevas to Pico, July 10, 1845; Bancroft, *California*, IV, 605.

[2] *Bancroft Collection* (Univ. of California). An inaccurate translation is printed in Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 503; and see Bancroft, *California*, IV, 508.

tioned law. The difference between the settlers in Texas and the settlers in California was as wide as the distance between the East and the West. The Texas settlers were invited to come and were offered grants of land. The California settlers occupied their lands in the teeth of the law, and in spite of reiterated public warnings. But they cared nothing at all for Mexican warnings.

The truth is that the Americans in the Sacramento valley and the hundreds who were toiling along the Oregon trail and across the mountain passes, looked upon the Mexicans in precisely the same light as European colonists looked on the natives of Australia or Africa or America. "Castro," to them, was a vague embodiment of some barbarous and incomprehensible authority, and they spoke of him and regarded him just as the seventeenth-century Englishmen who came to Virginia and Massachusetts spoke of Powhatan and Massasoit. And just as the English, when they wrote home, described Powhatan as a great emperor ruling over vast territories and with many princes in his train, so "Castro" and his few ragged followers were described as if Don José were a real general at the head of a real army. The American settlers in California could not understand "Castro's" laws or his language, and they had not the smallest intention of obeying the one or learning the other. They saw that he had vast and fertile lands, which were entirely unoccupied and which they intended to acquire for themselves. If he objected he was to be pacified and humored, but if he proved troublesome he was to be knocked on the head with as little compunction as a wild beast who should venture to attack them.

Rumor, founded on fact, asserted that "Castro" was gathering large bodies of troops at Santa Clara, and it was said that the object of this great armament was to march north to attack the Americans. The literal truth was that José Castro, who was at odds with Governor Pio Pico, of Los Angeles, had got together some seventy men with the purpose of marching south to fight the governor. It was also asserted that "Castro" was stirring up the Indians to

attack the settlers, and as a proof of this allegation Frémont said that a man named Hensley said that Sutter said that the Cosumne Indian chief said that Castro said he would give great rewards if the Indians would burn the crops of the settlers.[1]

Such stories passing from mouth to mouth through the valley inevitably drew the settlers one after another to Frémont's camp to relate and hear the latest tales, and the result was a conviction in their minds that something must be done to protect the Americans from Spanish outrage. Frémont certainly did nothing to disabuse their minds of the nonsense that was being circulated. How far he encouraged them is perhaps doubtful, but it is perfectly clear that his camp was a centre from which the most alarming stories spread, and that it attracted all the vagabonds and landless men in the country.

José Castro, lying at Santa Clara with his handful of Mexicans, sent one of his lieutenants, a man by the name of Francisco Arce, to Vallejo at Sonoma to buy or borrow some horses; and Arce, about the sixth of June, started on his return with a herd of one hundred and seventy head. The story reached Frémont's camp, and the conclusion was at once arrived at that these horses were intended to enable Castro to move against the settlers. The necessity of seizing the horses to thwart Castro's plans was an inevitable corollary, and accordingly a party of Americans, under the lead of one Ezekiel Merritt, set out, with Frémont's full knowledge and consent, if not by his direction, to capture the horses.[2] They had not the least difficulty in doing so. They surprised the unsuspecting Don Francisco and his

[1] Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 508.

[2] In conversation with Professor Royce, Frémont said he chose Arce's passing with the horses as the right moment for action, that he instructed the men in what it was needful for them to know, and that Merritt, who was "a good man," had instructions about taking the horses and subsequent proceedings. "I fully suppose and believe," notes Professor Royce, "that General Frémont must be here understood to use the word 'good' as a relative term,—relative, namely, to the business of taking horses by violence."—(Royce's *California*, 120.) "A coarse-grained, loud-mouthed, unprincipled, whiskey-drinking, quarrelsome fellow," is the character given Merritt by another historian. —(Bancroft, *California*, 738.)

men at dawn on the tenth of June, and took the horses back to Frémont's camp. All of the Mexican party were allowed to go their way, with a message that if Castro wanted the horses he might come and get them.

The next step was to take Sonoma, the only Mexican settlement of any consequence in the region north of San Francisco Bay, and on the afternoon of the eleventh of June twenty men, still under the lead of Merritt, started out from Frémont's camp. They were joined on the way by other casual Americans, and just before dawn on the morning of Sunday, the fourteenth of June, they waked up the inoffensive little village, took prisoners Mariano Vallejo, the great man of the place, his brother Salvador, his brother-in-law, Jacob P. Leese, and his secretary, Victor Prudon. These four unresisting captives were sent off to Frémont, and the captors then began to consider what they were to do with their prize. After long debate and considerable consumption of aguardiente, the thirty-two or three men who had taken Sonoma agreed to declare California an independent republic, with themselves as the governing body, and they hoisted a flag on which they had painted a bear, as the symbol of the new nation.

Mischief was now indeed afoot. "Domestic fury and fierce civil strife" were declared in northern California, and José Castro, on his part, cried havoc, and did his best to let slip the dogs of war. His cry was not very loud and his dogs could not do much but bark; but they did what they could. He issued two proclamations denouncing "the contemptible policy of the agents of the government of the United States," which had induced a number of adventurers to seize Sonoma, and he called upon his fellow-citizens to rise *en masse*, "irresistible and just." Peaceable foreigners, he declared, would not be molested. As for himself, he was a Mexican soldier who would be free and independent, and who would die with pleasure for those inestimable blessings.[1] He also wrote at the same time to Commander Montgomery, of the *Portsmouth*, saying that Captain Frémont, "without

[1] Bancroft, *California*, V, 133.

the formalities established among civilised nations," had invaded the country and seized Sonoma; to which Montgomery replied indignantly that Frémont had had nothing to do with the Sonoma affair, and that for Castro to accuse him of it was an insult to the American government.[1]

The Bear Flag party at the same time sent to Montgomery for powder. They undoubtedly supposed that he, as well as Frémont, was backing their enterprise, and they were a good deal astonished at receiving a letter from him which deserves mention as setting forth the whole duty of an American officer at that time and place. He had been on the point, he said, of sending an officer to inquire into the movement which had caused so much alarm, when the Bear Flag messenger arrived. The circumstances which had led to the hasty organization of the foreigners he had heard of vaguely. He held it to be the privilege of all men to resist oppression. He was glad to learn that the helpless people near Sonoma were to be kindly treated.

"Permit me, sir," he continued, "in response to your call for powder for the use of your party, to say that I am here as a representative of a government at peace (as far as I know) with Mexico and her province of California, having in charge the interests and the security of the commerce and citizens of the United States lawfully engaged in their pursuits, and have no right or authority to furnish munitions of war, or in any manner to take sides with any political party, or even indirectly to identify myself, or official name, with any popular movement (whether of foreign or native residents) of the country, and thus, sir, must decline giving the required aid."[2]

On the same day Frémont was writing to Montgomery from Sutter's Fort that the people of that neighborhood had made some movements with a view to establishing a settled and stable government; that both the people and authorities of the country persisted in connecting him with every movement; and that he was in hourly expectation of the approach of Castro. The unexpected hostility of the military authorities of California had thus, he continued,

[1] *Century Magazine*, XLI, 782 (March, 1891).
[2] Montgomery to Ide, June 16, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 524.

frustrated his intention of examining the Colorado River, and it was therefore his intention to go east toward the head-waters of the Arkansas, and thence to the frontier of Missouri, where he expected to arrive early in September. He would have to remain at Sutter's till about the first of July, and if in the meantime any attempt was made against him he would repel it, and he was regulating his conduct accordingly, for the nature of his instructions and the peaceful nature of his operations did not contemplate any active hostility on his part, even in the event of war with Mexico. He hoped the *Portsmouth* would remain in the Bay of San Francisco, "where your presence will operate strongly to check proceedings against us." He would also feel more secure if communication by the ship's boats were kept open.[1]

Montgomery, who was an honest gentleman, and had no reason for supposing that Frémont was not telling him the exact truth, replied that the events of the last few days were so important for California and the United States that he had decided to stay where he was, and would gladly keep open the communication with Frémont's camp. He himself would preserve a strict neutrality while confessing a sympathy with the "gallant little band in arms for mutual defence." The *Cyane* had come back again to Monterey from Mexico, but he had received no news by her.[2]

Three days later Montgomery innocently wrote again, giving the current news of the civil commotions. There had been a skirmish north of San Rafael, in which the insurgents had had the best of it, and Castro was reported to be at Santa Clara with seventy men. He enclosed a package to go to Washington for the Secretary of the Navy, which he requested Frémont to take charge of, and he ended with wishes for a safe and pleasant journey home.[3]

These two letters did not reach Frémont at Sutter's, for on the day the first of them was written he had left to join

[1] Frémont to Montgomery, June 16, 1846; *Century Magazine*, XLI, 783.
[2] Montgomery to Frémont, June 23, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 527.
[3] Same to same, June 26, 1846; *Ibid.*, 527–528.

the insurgent force at Sonoma. Whatever Montgomery's ideas might be as to the duty of an officer of the United States, Frémont did not share them. He had not scrupled to deceive both Montgomery and Larkin, the other American agents in California, as to his intentions about returning home, and he had not scrupled to act in direct defiance of orders. The instructions to Larkin, which were given to Gillespie and Frémont as a guide for their action, required these officers of the American government to ascertain the disposition of the Californian people and conciliate their feelings in favor of the United States. Frémont (with whom Gillespie acted) never made an honest effort to find out the disposition of the Californians, and still less to conciliate them. Instead, he did what he could to sow strife and bring about war.

The news of the settlers' outbreak reached Santa Barbara at about the same time that Frémont reached Sonoma, and the governor of California boldly met the crisis by the usual method of issuing a flaming proclamation. In this he informed the inhabitants that a gang of North American adventurers, "with the blackest treason that the spirit of evil could invent," had invaded Sonoma and carried off four prisoners. He therefore called on all Mexicans to fly with the utmost haste in pursuit of the treacherous foe, to follow him to the furthest wilderness, and to run swiftly to crown their brows with the fresh laurels of unfading glory which were ready to be gathered in the fields of the north.[1] But the fervent appeals of Governor Pico were not productive of much result, and by the first of July he had raised only about a hundred men, with whom he started a few days later to meet his dearest foe, General José Castro.

While Pico had been thus busy in the south and Castro in the north, trying to raise forces to meet the Bear Flag party, Frémont and his men were at Sonoma, uncertain what to do next. The Bears had repulsed a small body of men north of San Rafael, a few men had been killed in cold blood on each side, and some twenty men, under Frémont,

[1] Bancroft, *California*, V, 138.

had crossed the Golden Gate and spiked the worthless guns in the old Mexican fort near the presidio. They had also celebrated the Fourth of July at Sonoma, and had done something toward a permanent organization of their force, which, with Frémont's men, now numbered more than two hundred. But the problem of how to conquer the rest of California was still before them. Montgomery had again refused to help,[1] and Larkin was writing to Governor Pico to explain that he, as consul, had no authority over the Americans who had broken the laws at Sonoma, and to deny that his government had any share in the matter. This situation was dramatically ended by the appearance of Commodore Sloat as *deus ex machinâ*.

Sloat had been off the western coast of Mexico—generally at Mazatlan—for some months with a squadron composed of the frigate *Savannah*, of fifty-four guns, four sloops-of-war of twenty-four guns each, an armed schooner carrying twelve guns, and a supply ship—in all, seven vessels mounting a hundred and sixty-two guns. In view of the possibility of a war with England, he had been concerned about the movements of the British fleet under Admiral Seymour, who in his turn was uneasy and was writing home for reinforcements.[2]

Late in March, 1846, came news from California of Frémont's earliest difficulties with Castro, and the sloop *Portsmouth* was despatched to Monterey to protect American interests. Nothing happened for some weeks afterward, but on May 17 Sloat learned that the Guadalajara newspapers were announcing a victory over Taylor's forces on the Rio Grande and the capture of some American cavalry. He at once sent the sloop-of-war *Cyane* to Monterey with a letter to Larkin marked "strictly confidential," in which he gave the information, as he had received it, of Torrejon's crossing the Rio Grande and the capture of Thornton's party. "It is my intention," Sloat continued, "to visit your place immediately," but this was to be kept a pro-

[1] Montgomery to Gillespie, July 1, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 529.
[2] E. D. Adams, *British Interests and Activities in Texas*, 200.

found secret, as no officer of Sloat's squadron had any information of the intended movements.[1]

Two more weeks passed, but Sloat did not move. On May 31 he heard of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and his first impulse was to sail for California. He therefore wrote to the Secretary of the Navy that he had received such intelligence as he thought would justify his acting upon the order of June 24, 1845, and would sail "immediately." Instead, he sent the sloop *Levant* to Monterey.[2]

On June 5 the news came of the capture of Matamoros by Taylor, and thereupon the commodore sat down and wrote to the Secretary of the Navy that since writing on May 31 he had come to the conclusion that the instructions of June 24, 1845, "and every subsequent order," would not justify "taking possession of any part of California, or any hostile measure against Mexico (notwithstanding their attack upon our troops), as neither *party have declared* war." He should therefore wait until he was certain that one or the other had done so, or until he learned that the squadron in the Gulf had commenced offensive operations.[3] Next day appeared this entry in the *Savannah's* log:

"June 7.—News received of the blockade of Vera Cruz by the American squadron; at 2 P. M. got under way for Monterey."[4]

The *Savannah* arrived at her destination on July 2, and again Sloat's mind was thrown into greater uncertainty than ever. He had expected to find California itself at peace, and possibly to find further news of the war on the Rio Grande. He found neither, but he learned that

[1] Sloat to Larkin, May 18, 1846; Bancroft, *California*, V, 203. The *Cyane* arrived at Monterey about the twentieth of May.

[2] Commodore John D. Sloat was at this time sixty-six years old, in bad health, and anxious to be relieved from command. He had been in the navy since he was a lad, but never seems to have shown any signs of superior ability, and his whole conduct on this occasion evinced a single-minded desire to avoid responsibility and possible censure.

[3] Sloat to Bancroft, June 6, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 536. Italics in original.

[4] *Century Magazine*, XL, 793 (Oct., 1890).

the American settlers in the north, under command of an officer of the United States army, had begun hostilities. For five days he struggled with the torturing uncertainties of a mind suffering from nervous disease, but at length he concluded that the time for action had really come, and on July 7, 1846, a landing party hoisted the American flag at Monterey. The next day Montgomery, under orders from Sloat, took possession of the shores of San Francisco Bay, and the Bears joyfully abandoned their infant republic and hoisted the American flag at Sonoma.

The news reached General Castro at San Juan on the eighth of July, and he marched south at once to meet Governor Pico. The two parties met four days later near the old mission of San Luis Obispo, and the united force made the best of its way to Los Angeles, leaving all the rest of California to the conquering Americans.

Commodore Stockton on the *Congress*, having left the Sandwich Islands on June 23, anchored abreast of the *Cyane* in the harbor of Monterey on Wednesday afternoon, the fifteenth of July. He had been nearly nine months on his way from the Chesapeake, having lain twenty-three days at Rio de Janeiro, twelve days at Valparaiso, six weeks at Callao, and two weeks at Honolulu. Clearly the Secretary of the Navy, who had come in person to Norfolk to see the ship off, had not urged the necessity of great haste.[1] On the next day after the arrival of the *Congress*, the sixteenth of July, a large ship entered the harbor. She proved to be H. B. M. ship *Collingwood*, of eighty guns, Admiral Seymour's flag-ship. He had sailed from Mazatlan on May 24, two weeks before the *Savannah*, and had gone to San Blas (a hundred and fifty miles to the southward), where he lay till June 13, six days after the *Savannah* had sailed from Mazatlan for Monterey.[2]

On the day of his leaving San Blas Seymour wrote to the Admiralty of his intended visit to Monterey. He had not, he said, judged it advisable to go to California, under the

[1] Colton's *Deck and Port* gives a diary of the voyage.
[2] *Century Magazine*, XL, 794.

views expressed by Lord Aberdeen to her Majesty's minister in Mexico, which deprecated interference while California remained a part of the Mexican republic; but he had sent the *Juno*, Captain Blake, on May 11 to observe what was passing. The directions to Captain Blake, "in the event of California's declaring or having declared its Independence of Mexico," were to use his influence to counteract any inclination on the part of the authorities to place themselves under the protection of any foreign power; and Seymour had given Captain Blake copies of Lord Aberdeen's two letters of December 31, 1844, to Mr. Bankhead and Mr. Barron.[1]

"This contingency," he concluded, "having occurred while I remain on the Coast, I deem it right, although I can form no very favorable anticipations of a satisfactory result, to proceed to Monterey, and ascertain the actual state of affairs; and it is my intention to sail from San Blas, for that purpose this evening."[2]

What this muddle-headed gentleman meant by the "contingency" which had occurred to justify a visit to California is not at all clear; but his letter is of extreme value as showing that he had no orders to seize the country under any contingency, and that he had not the smallest idea of a "race" with Commodore Sloat for priority of possession—a legend which was long industriously propagated in the United States.

Seymour stayed a week at Monterey, exchanged the customary civilities with the American ships, witnessed Frémont's dramatic entry at the head of a hundred and sixty frontiersmen, and finally, before sailing for the Sandwich Islands, wrote an excellent letter of advice for Forbes, the British consul, warning him to preserve the strictest neutrality.[3]

By the time the *Collingwood* left, Commodore Sloat, worn out by excitement and illness, was hesitating whether he

[1] See page 51, above.
[2] Seymour to Corry, June 13, 1846; E. D. Adams, 258.
[3] Seymour to Forbes, July 22, 1846; Frémont's *Memoirs*, I, 555.

ought not to hand over the command to Stockton, the next officer in rank; but he could not bring himself to act. Stockton, with that robust self-confidence which he never failed to exhibit in any relation in life, was ready and anxious to undertake the duty. On July 23, 1846, he sent a letter to Sloat pointing out what ought to be done, and, in the tone one might adopt toward a sick child, he asked: "Had you not better send me an order to take command at once, and make my own arrangements? It will facilitate operations, and relieve you from a great deal of trouble."[1] Under the influence of Stockton's stronger will Sloat presently yielded, and on June 29 sailed in the *Levant* for Panama, reaching home in November, where he received a very sharp reprimand for his delay in seizing California.

How Stockton and Frémont blustered and swaggered, how they got possession of all Upper California, how Governor Pio Pico and General José Castro fled to Mexico, how Gillespie, left in command at Los Angeles, exhibited himself to the natives as a petty tyrant, how they rose and fought the Americans with unexpected energy and temporary success, how Colonel Kearny with a hundred dragoons came overland in time to have a share in the fighting, and how the Americans finally succeeded, are details of local California history which do not fall within the scope of this book. It is enough to say that by what was called the treaty of Cahuenga the entire native force surrendered on January 13, 1847, and that not long afterward American reinforcements arrived, whereby American control of the country was so fast riveted that no possible native rising and no conceivable expedition from Mexico could have shaken it. Thenceforth, all through the war, California remained securely in the undisputed possession of the United States.

[1] Stockton to Sloat, July 23, 1846; *ibid.*, 544.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### PLANNING A CAMPAIGN—THE OCCUPATION OF NEW MEXICO

WHEN Congress had placed at the disposal of the administration ten million dollars and fifty thousand men the real task of preparing for a foreign war was only just begun. How great that task was nobody in the cabinet had any idea. In the seventy years of national existence only two wars had been fought—both against Great Britain and both on American soil—and the men at the head of affairs were innocent of any knowledge of what was involved in conducting such an enterprise as that on which they were now embarked.

Not a single step had been taken toward planning a campaign. There was no intelligence department for either the army or the navy. The government—as the President noted later with vexation—was without reliable information of the topography of Mexico, the character of the roads, the supplies which could be drawn from the country, or the facilities or obstructions which might exist in carrying on a campaign.[1] Nobody seems to have known anything of even the seasons. Scott announced, with the air of disclosing an important secret, that there was rain in northern Mexico from May to the end of September, and that there was therefore no advantage in undertaking military operations before October.[2] Even the immediate surroundings of a

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 139 (Sept. 15, 1846).

[2] Scott to Marcy, May 21, 1846; Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 6. Scott said he had received this information from "Col. A. Butler, a distinguished officer of the War of 1812, since minister in Mexico, &c. &c., and from General J. T. Mason, who has travelled much in Mexico with Col. Butler. It is clear to my mind that the two know more of northern and middle Mexico than all other persons, taken together, in the District of Columbia." See

place so important as Vera Cruz were unknown, and the discussion of a plan to attack it was suspended for a whole week, until a former consul could be summoned from Rhode Island to "draw a rough diagram" for the benefit of the military and naval officers whose advice was asked.[1]

The obvious line of advance along the Rio Grande had never been examined. Nobody in Washington knew what was the depth of that river, or its volume of water at different seasons of the year, or how far it was navigable by river steam-boats.

"Had we foreseen," wrote the quartermaster-general six months after war was declared, "the nature of the navigation of the Mexican coasts and harbors, and of the Rio del Norte, and built suitable steamboats several months ago, a million dollars might have been saved."[2]

The navy, so far as sea-going ships were concerned, was in excellent condition and quite capable of maintaining a blockade or capturing such places as could be approached by vessels of deep draught; but it proved to be deficient in light-draught steamers, which were essential if the capture of the towns near the Gulf was to be attempted.[3] The number of muskets issued to the navy was too small to arm landing parties of any size, and light field-pieces for use in such expeditions had never been supplied to cruising ships, although that practice existed in foreign navies. The nearest navy-yard was at Pensacola, which was quite inadequate for the demands upon it. And finally, the requirements of steam-vessels being as yet hardly understood, little or no provision for coaling had been made.[4]

The regular army was hopelessly inadequate in numbers, however excellent in the quality of its personnel. The total force on paper was 8,616; but the total number "present for

Chapter IX, above, as to the travels of Butler and Mason in the year 1832. One wonders what had brought these two worthies together again after fourteen years.—(Scott to Marcy, May 25, 1846; *ibid.*, 11.)

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 180, 195.

[2] Jesup to Marcy, Nov. 7, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 554.

[3] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, Dec. 5, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 382.

[4] Connor's *Home Squadron*, etc., *passim*.

duty," by the returns at the close of the year 1845, was only 643 commissioned officers (including the staff) and 5,612 non-commissioned officers, musicians, artificers, and privates—a total of a little over six thousand. The regiments had been reduced to skeletons by the act of August 23, 1842,[1] under which the number of enlisted men in a company was fixed at forty-two for the infantry and artillery, and fifty for the dragoons. The result was that the eight regiments of infantry and the two of dragoons averaged only a little over three hundred men each, "present for duty." The artillery were nominally organised to form four regiments, of somewhat greater actual strength.[2]

As soon as war was declared Congress did what it could to provide for increasing the regular army. An increase in the number of privates in existing regiments of the regular army to one hundred men in each company was authorised, which would double the force. A corps of "Sappers, Miners, and Pontoniers" was created—on paper. And an act was passed "to provide for raising a Regiment of mounted Riflemen and for establishing military Stations on the Route to Oregon."[3] A month later, on June 19 and 26, the President was authorised to appoint another major-general and two brigadiers in the regular army; the organization of the volunteers into divisions and brigades with the proper general officers was regulated, and the appointment of additional officers of the quartermaster's, commissary, and medical departments was provided for.[4]

These latter departments were probably adequate, before the war, for their respective duties, but until the end of June nothing had been done toward developing an organization capable of dealing with a force of fifty or sixty thousand men operating in a foreign country. No thought had ever been given to the subject. Taylor at Palo Alto had

[1] U. S. Stat. at Large, V, 512.
[2] *Report of the Commanding General of the Army*, Nov. 20, 1845; Sen. Doc. 1, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 208 *et seq.*
[3] U. S. Stat. at Large, IX, 11, 12, 13. The "mounted rifles" served, in fact, in Mexico.
[4] *Ibid.*, 17, 20.

been encumbered with a train of hundreds of wagons, and it was not until months afterward that the use of pack-mules for army transport seems to have crossed the mind of any one in Washington.[1]

The younger officers were mostly graduates of West Point, and so far as theoretical training in the art of war could make them good soldiers they were excellent, but they had never seen a civilised enemy. The greatest weakness of the army was in its senior officers, most of whom were incapacitated by age or sickness. As there was no retired list, "there was hardly a regiment in service which could take the field with its full number of field officers. . . . The general officers were also advanced in years, and many of them too much so to be useful."[2]

Of these elderly generals, the highest in rank, though by no means in years, was Major-General Winfield Scott, then just a little under sixty years of age.[3] He was a Virginian by birth, like General Taylor; but there the resemblance ended, for no two men were ever more unlike. Scott was a citizen of the world, well read, fond of company and good living, with genial manners. He had spent a year or more at William and Mary College, and had then studied law in Richmond, and when twenty-two years old had obtained a commission in the regular army. His services in the War of 1812, which shortly afterward ensued, were against British troops, and justly attracted the attention and admiration of the country; and they were rewarded by rapid promotion and a gold medal struck by order of Congress.

Since the close of that war he had twice visited Europe as a traveller; had had some share in directing the conduct of the Black Hawk and Seminole wars; had been sent by President Jackson to take command in Charleston Harbor when nullification threatened civil war; and had discharged with success quasi-diplomatic missions to the Cherokee Indians and on the Canadian frontier. In 1841, upon the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 113 (Sept. 5, 1846).
[2] Ripley, I, 95. Adjutant-General to Secretary of War, July 30, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 71.
[3] He was born June 13, 1786.

death of General Macomb, he was made a major-general and called to the command of the whole army. His duties had on the whole been performed in pleasant places, and during his nearly fifty years in the army he had lived chiefly in or near New Orleans, New York, and Washington.

His colossal frame and striking features would have attracted attention at any time and in any company, but he also loved to set off his personal advantages by the finest uniforms. But for the tall, fair periwig, he was Esmond's General Webb to the life, and those lines which pleased Webb so highly might well have been written of Scott:

> "Before the front the general sternly rides
> With such an air as Mars to battle strides;
> Propitious heaven must sure a hero save,
> Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave."

He was his own worst enemy. A love of paradox, extraordinary vanity, and the restless pen of a ready writer were his chief defects. But he was withal a diligent student of military affairs, and knew from books the whole art of war as it was practised thirty years after Waterloo. His personal courage was unquestionable, his health and energy were unimpaired, and he possessed the keen judgment of men that enabled him to select and inspire young and capable subordinates. He had, in a word, most of the essential qualities of a great general. But at the beginning of the Mexican War Scott was suffering from one very serious disability. He was a declared Whig, and had, unfortunately for his usefulness, allowed himself to be "mentioned" for the Presidency on more than one occasion. Indeed, in the convention which nominated General Harrison he had received sixty-two votes on the ballot before the last.[1] In 1844 he had prudently declined to let his name be used as against Clay, but it could hardly be doubted that he had an eager eye on the next nomination.

[1] Scott himself believed that he would have been nominated at that time but for the blundering of his former legal preceptor, Mr. Leigh, who headed the Virginia delegation.—(Scott's *Autobiography*, 355–359.)

It is therefore, perhaps, not very surprising that Polk's administration did not care to consult him before the war with Mexico was declared. What is much more singular is that Scott should not have thought it worth while to trouble himself on the subject. He must have guessed, at least since January, 1846, when the order was sent to Taylor to advance to the Rio Grande, that war was possible; but he never, so far as appears, made the slightest attempt at preparation. A more experienced administration would doubtless have set the staff of the War Department to work from the moment diplomatic negotiations were broken off, so as to have plans ready for any emergency. But, as it was, they did not call for information and Scott did not volunteer advice; and so by the thirteenth of May, when war was declared, everything had still to be planned and provided for.

Next in rank to Scott, although several years older, was Brigadier-General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, a major-general by brevet, who was stationed at New Orleans, in command of what was called the western division.[1] Nearly twenty years before he had had a bitter controversy with Scott, and they had been on bad terms ever since. They had been rivals in Adams's administration for appointment to the head of the army, at the time when General Macomb was appointed. A majority of the cabinet had favored Scott, but Adams would not have him.

"There was not," he recorded, "one voice for Gaines. He and Scott have both made themselves obnoxious by continual acts of insubordination and contempt of the civil authority. Their controversy for rank and precedency has been carried on by both not only with rancor but indecency."[2]

The only other officer in the army above the rank of colonel was John E. Wool, a native of New York, who had

[1] As to Gaines's earlier record see Vol. I, 372–380, above.

[2] Adams's *Memoirs*, VII, 507. Richard Rush, who was a member of the Adams cabinet, related some further particulars of this controversy to President Polk. See Polk's *Diary*, II, 343; and Curtis's *Life of Buchanan*, I, 605 *et seq.*, where a long letter from Rush gives part of the story.

entered the regular army in 1812 and had served with great credit in his native state and in Canada. For gallant conduct at the battle of Plattsburg he was given the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, served subsequently as inspector-general, and was made brigadier-general in 1841. At the outbreak of the Mexican War he was in command of the eastern division, with head-quarters at New York.

But though the organisation of a general staff was elementary in the extreme, and the President and all his advisers had utterly neglected the most obvious preliminaries to a declaration of war, certain features of the first campaign were evidently indicated in advance by political as well as military considerations. In the first place, it was the fixed and repeatedly expressed purpose of the President to take so much of the Mexican territory as would at least be equivalent to a war indemnity, in addition to compensation to American claimants. It seems, however, that that policy was not then clearly understood, even by Polk's Secretary of State. At a cabinet meeting held on the evening of the day war was declared, a draft was read of a circular to American diplomatic agents announcing the fact, which was intended to be communicated to all foreign powers. Buchanan, according to the President's diary, had stated in this draft that the United States had not gone to war with a view to acquiring either California or New Mexico or any other portion of the Mexican territory.

"I told him," the President recorded, "that though we had not gone to war for conquest, yet it was clear that in making peace we would if practicable obtain California and such other portion of the Mexican territory as would be sufficient to indemnify our claimants on Mexico, and to defray the expenses of the war which that power by her long-continued wrongs and injuries had forced us to wage. I told him it was well known that the Mexican Government had no other means of indemnifying us."

But Buchanan, with his singular faculty of seeing terrifying obstacles in every imaginable path of conduct, was for a self-denying ordinance.

"Mr. Buchanan said if when Mr. McLane announced to Lord Aberdeen the existence of the War with Mexico the latter should demand of Mr. McLane to know if we intended to acquire California or any other part of the Mexican territory and no satisfactory answer was given, he thought it almost certain that both England and France would join with Mexico in the war against us."

A hot discussion at once sprang up, which lasted more than two hours—"one of the most earnest and interesting," the President thought, which had occurred in his cabinet. The result was that the paragraph objected to was struck out.[1]

It was the conclusion of the cabinet that New Mexico and Upper California ought to be seized at once, and that the coast of the Gulf of Mexico must be blockaded. It was reasonably certain that no great opposition was to be anticipated in any of these attempts, and so far as the navy was concerned it was only necessary to notify the commanding officers of the Gulf and Pacific squadrons that war had been declared. But the military forces had yet to be organized, their numbers determined, their commanders selected, and their line of march definitely fixed.

For invading New Mexico an admirable nucleus of a force already existed in Colonel Stephen W. Kearny's regiment of dragoons, five companies of which had made a practice march of over two thousand miles during the preceding summer. The greater part of the command was at Fort Leavenworth, and the remainder in Iowa and Arkansas; and as they were immediately available, orders were sent to Kearny on the day war was declared to set out on the Santa Fe trail. At the same time a requisition was sent to the Governor of Missouri for a thousand mounted volunteers to follow him.[2]

The blockade of the Mexican ports and the seizure of their frontier settlements were, however, relatively unimportant measures. They would not at all affect the or-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 397 (May 13, 1846). The circular as finally sent out is printed in Moore's *Buchanan*, VI, 484.
[2] Polk's *Diary*, I, 396.

ganized military force of Mexico, and it was obvious, even to the unmilitary President and his cabinet, that this latter must be the real objective of a campaign. How that end was to be attained it was for him (in the last resort) to decide. The recent act of Congress had given him wide discretion. It was left to him to decide how many volunteers (not exceeding fifty thousand) should be called for, a decision which necessarily involved a consideration of some consistent plan; but Scott, sent for to the White House, had only an incomplete project to present. It was not until three days after war had been formally declared that the barest outline of a plan of campaign could be laid before the cabinet. It was then tentatively agreed that about two thousand men should march on Santa Fe and about four thousand on Chihuahua (which there was some reason to suppose was hostile to the central government in Mexico), while the remaining available forces were to "occupy the country on the lower Del Norte and in the interior."[1] Twenty thousand volunteers were to be called for in the first instance, which were to be apportioned among the Southern and Western states—Texas, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, and Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The President himself thought twenty thousand an excessive number, but was "not willing to take the responsibility of any failure of the campaign by refusing to grant to Gen'l Scott all he asked."[2]

This was all very well as far as it went, and it provided occupation for six thousand volunteers; but it left open the question as to precisely what was to be done with the other fourteen thousand, not to speak of Taylor's regulars, who were intended to operate "on the lower Del Norte and in the interior." Scott's advice was sought, but the President was not favorably impressed with him. "He has had experience in his profession," the President confided to his diary, "but I thought was rather scientific and visionary in his views"; but nevertheless the command of the invading

[1] *Ibid.*, 403 (May 16, 1846).
[2] *Ibid.*, 401 (May 14, 1846).

army was verbally offered to General Scott and accepted by him.

Within a week the President began to doubt whether Scott was the man for the place, after all. A story reached him that Scott had said he would probably not go to the seat of war until about the first of September; and the President, who was still under the customary delusion of American public men, that a few thousand recruits with weapons in their hands constituted an army, sent word to Scott that no such delay would be permitted and he must proceed to his post or be superseded.[1] Again, two days later, on Thursday, May 21, there was brought to the White House a private letter written by Scott to Senator Archer, of Virginia, in which very strong language was used in reference to the appointment of officers to the new regiment of "mounted rifles," intended for service in Oregon.

"The proposed Riflemen," ran the letter, "are intended by western men to give commissions or rather pay to western democrats. Not an eastern man, not a graduate of the Military Academy and certainly not a whig would obtain a place. . . . You may be certain I shall not dishonor myself by recommending any individual whatever."

A letter of this kind, addressed by the general in command of the army to one of the leaders of the opposition in the Senate, was enough to rouse the meekest of Presidents, and it made Polk furious.

"The letter," he noted, "was of a partisan character; wholly unbecoming the commander-in-chief of the army, and highly exceptionable in its tenor and language toward the President. It proved to me that Gen'l Scott was not only hostile, but recklessly vindictive in his feeling towards my administration. . . . After seeing this letter I can

[1] *Ibid.*, 408 (May 19, 1846). The story in General Taylor's camp was that Scott had declined to go to the front because it would interfere with his prospects for the next presidential election; but in Taylor's own opinion, Scott's refusal was sure to "blight his prospects most effectually for the presidency, which he has been looking forward to with a longing eye for many years."—(Taylor to Wood, June 2 and 24, 1846; *Taylor's Letters from the Battlefields*, 11–18.)

have no confidence in Gen'l Scott's disposition to carry out the views of the administration as commander-in-chief of the army on the Del Norte."[1]

But worse remained behind. Marcy, in conversation with Scott on Wednesday evening, May 20, had told him, *apropos* of his announced intention not to go to the Rio Grande until September, that there was a good deal of impatience at his delay. Marcy, it seems, had not thought it best to give Scott the President's message, but had spoken in general terms of the excited feelings of the country, the "patriotic ardor" of the volunteers, and the disappointment they and the country would feel if an army of eight or ten thousand men were idle for months on the Rio Grande. Scott slept on this conversation, and, instead of going to Marcy and talking it out face to face, committed the almost inconceivable folly of writing him a long letter.

After stating clearly and forcibly the amount and variety of preliminary work necessary to be done in Washington, Scott went on to say that, as he learned that "much impatience is already felt, perhaps in high quarters," at his delay, he must now stop work in order to guard himself "against, perhaps, utter condemnation, in the quarters alluded to." He was, he said, too old a soldier not to feel the infinite importance of securing himself against danger in the rear before advancing against the public enemy. If he could not have the active, candid, and steady support of the government, it would be infinitely better for all concerned that some other commander of the army in Mexico should be selected.

"My explicit meaning is," he added, "that I do not desire to place myself in the most perilous of all positions:—*a fire upon my rear, from Washington, and the fire, in front, from the Mexicans.*"[2]

Marcy, of course, sent this silly letter to the President at once. Polk considered that it conclusively proved Scott's

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 414 (May 21, 1846).

[2] Scott to Marcy, May 21, 1846; Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 5. Italics in original.

"bad feelings and hostility to the administration," and that, taken in connection with the letter to Archer, the administration would not be safe in intrusting the command of the army in the field to one who was so bitterly opposed.[1] Nevertheless, the cautious President discussed the matter twice over with his cabinet before a reply to Scott was sent. The reply was drafted by Marcy and revised by Buchanan, and expressed in very fitting language the surprise and deep regret of the President at Scott's letter, and at the imputations it contained. In view of General Scott's opinions of the motives and designs of the Executive,

> "the President would be wanting in his duty to the country if he were to persist in his determination of imposing upon you the command of the army in the war against Mexico. . . . I am therefore directed, by him, to say that you will be continued in your present position here, and will devote your efforts to making arrangements and preparations for the early and vigorous prosecution of hostilities against Mexico."[2]

Scott saw that he had gone too far, and on the instant of receiving Marcy's letter wrote another long explanation of his views; but this time he was apologetic and explanatory. "Your letter of this date," he wrote, "received at about 6 P. M. as I sat down to take a hasty plate of soup, demands a prompt reply"; and he explained that when he had written of impatience felt, "perhaps in high quarters" (not the *highest quarter*), he had intended to refer to several leading friends and supposed confidants of the President in Congress. He believed that they would sooner or later open fire on him; and his former letter had been written, in part, to guard the President against them. He wished he had the time to do justice to his recollection of the President's excellent sense, military comprehension, patience, and courtesies in the course of their interviews; but whether it was the President's pleasure to send him to the Rio Grande or retain him in Washington, he was ready to do his duty.[3]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 415.
[2] Marcy to Scott, May 25, 1846; Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 7–9.
[3] Scott to Marcy, May 25, 1846; *ibid.*, 12.

There was a further exchange of letters of no special significance, and there the matter (officially) ended; but, in response to a request from Congress, all the correspondence was published. Scott's unlucky phrases tickled the sense of humor of the American people, and for years his "hasty plate of soup" and the "fire upon my rear" were household words throughout the country.

The bewildered cabinet at Washington, being thus left without a professional adviser, took up for itself the question of planning a campaign, and naturally turned again to the more political objects—the securing of California and Chihuahua.

It was thought probable that the navy alone could not conquer and hold so large a country as California. It was therefore concluded that reinforcements should be sent. But to send any considerable force by sea to California was evidently something that would consume much time, for it would be impossible to transport a large body of men with their supplies across the Isthmus of Panama, even if ships could have been procured in time to meet them in the Pacific. A voyage round Cape Horn was a matter of many months, even after transports were secured. The other solution was a march across the continent.

After much conversation and discussion, it was finally settled that an expedition under Colonel Kearny should be authorized, and confidential orders were sent on June 3, 1846, directing him, after securing New Mexico, to proceed with a part of his men by way of the Gila River to the Pacific coast. An additional thousand mounted troops were called for from Missouri to join him (making two thousand volunteers in all), and Kearny was authorized to enlist "as many of the valuable men about Bent's fort" —trappers and plainsmen—as practicable. In addition, he was authorized to muster into service men from the Mormon emigrants, then on their way to California, and such American citizens as could be found on the Sacramento River. With this miscellaneous force he was to take possession of California, establish temporary civil governments,

and "act in such a manner as best to conciliate the inhabitants, and render them friendly to the United States." It was hoped that he might be in California before winter, but the widest discretion was left to him. Artillery, ammunition, and supplies would be sent to him by sea.[1] At the same time a battery of regular artillery was ordered to go by Cape Horn,[2] and somewhat later a regiment of New York volunteers was also sent by the same route.[3]

The expedition to Chihuahua was more slowly evolved. It had been provisionally agreed to march "near four thousand men" to Chihuahua, and General John E. Wool was sent for to come to Washington to confer with the President and the Secretary of War. But these conferences seem to have developed doubts and difficulties, and Wool was merely ordered to go west to raise a force of volunteers and march them to the Rio Grande. What he was to do with them when he got there, was a matter to be decided thereafter.[4] A fortnight later he was ordered to proceed at once to San Antonio, Texas, and take command of the forces ordered to that point. He was to report to General Taylor and await his orders, which, Wool was told, would probably require him to march on Chihuahua. A regular battery of field artillery, two companies of dragoons, and two companies of regular infantry would probably form a part of his force.[5]

But the despatch of Kearny and Wool on their respective expeditions did not help solve the really troublesome problem of the war. The inquiry still kept coming up: What was to be done with the main army under Taylor? Taylor himself, as soon as he had taken Matamoros, had asked the same question.

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 427, 429, 437–440. Scott to Kearny, May 31, 1846; Marcy to Kearny, June 3, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 241–245.

[2] Scott to Tompkins, June 20, 1846; *ibid.*, 245. William Tecumseh Sherman was junior first lieutenant of this battery.

[3] Benton, for some strange reason, thought they must go as emigrants, to be discharged in California at the end of their service.—(Polk's *Diary*, I, 431.)

[4] *Ibid.*, 435 (May 28, 1846).

[5] Adjutant-General to Wool, June 11, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 328.

"Not being fully in possession," he wrote, "of the views or policy of the government in regard to operations in this quarter, modified, as they perhaps have been, by the recent defeat of the Mexican army, I have the honor respectfully to solicit further instructions for my guidance."

It was plain to him that an advance by land from Matamoros was impracticable in view of the character of the country; but if the river proved navigable for steam-boats as high as Camargo, and if a depot could be established and maintained there, he believed operations could be carried on thence in the direction of Monterey.[1]

Taylor's letter was crossed by one from the Secretary of War which exhibited even greater uncertainty.

"You are advised," wrote Marcy, "to prosecute the war with vigor, in the manner you may deem most effective. Not knowing what are the operations you propose to carry on, I cannot well determine the number of volunteers you will be likely to want. I am anxious to hear your views as to the measures you propose to execute. It is hoped that while the season favors, you will make such progress as that your troops may be enabled safely to occupy healthy positions before the less healthy season commences. I wish to be favored with your views."[2]

Before receiving Taylor's letter of May 21, Marcy wrote again, explaining the attitude of perplexity which prevailed in Washington. The towns on the Rio Grande above Laredo were believed to be healthy, and Monterey, in the interior, particularly so. It was specially desirable that Monterey should be taken and held. It was hoped that these points might be secured before the autumn campaign should open. The uninterrupted use of the Rio Grande for the transportation of supplies was counted on. But the nature of that very irregular stream was evidently not at all understood at head-quarters, nor the nature of

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, May 21, 1846; *ibid.*, 300. The city of Monterey, which of course is not to be confounded with Monterey in California, was the principal town of the department of Nuevo Leon, about a hundred and fifty miles in a straight line from the nearest point on the Rio Grande. The modern (and perhaps the more correct) spelling is "Monterrey."

[2] Marcy to Taylor, May 28, 1846; *ibid.*, 282.

the road from the river to Monterey, nor the means of taking that city.

Taylor's "views and suggestions in relation to the fall campaign" were therefore once more requested. The President's determination, he was informed,

"is to have the war prosecuted with vigor, and to embrace in the objects to be compassed in that campaign such as will dispose the enemy to desire an end of the war. Shall the campaign be conducted with the view of striking at the city of Mexico; or confined, so far as regards the forces under your immediate command, to the northern provinces of Mexico? . . . Should our army penetrate far into the interior of Mexico, how are supplies to be obtained? Can they be, to any considerable extent, drawn from the enemy's country, or must they be obtained from the United States? If the latter what are the facilities and difficulties of transportation?

"A peace must be conquered in the shortest space of time practicable. Your views of the manner of doing it are requested." [1]

Four days later some, at least, of the uncertainties in the minds of the authorities seem to have been dissipated, due, perhaps, to the fact that the President and his cabinet were for the moment wholly absorbed in the final adjustment of the Oregon question, so that the subject of a plan of campaign was temporarily left in the hands of soldiers.[2] At any rate, the general in command of the army sent Taylor that week the first definite orders he received. He was instructed that, with the reinforcements on the way, he would soon have a total force of about twenty-three thousand men.

"Without waiting," continued the orders, "for the arrival of that amount of force, but before, and as soon as you shall deem it safe, in respect to the relative numbers and positions of the enemy, your knowledge of the country, your supplies and means of transportation, it is the wish and expectation of the President that, with your accustomed energy, you take up lines of march beyond the Rio Grande,

[1] Same to same, June 8, 1846; *ibid.*, 324.

[2] Aberdeen's draft of the Oregon treaty was received on Saturday, June 6, and discussed by the President with members of his cabinet on that and the three following days. On Wednesday, June 10, the President's message was sent to the Senate, and on Friday, June 12, the Senate advised the acceptance of the British proposals.

and press your operations toward the heart of the enemy's country; that is, upon such important points as you may deem necessary to conquer and to hold. The high road to the capital of Mexico will of course be one of those lines."[1]

It was not until the second of July that Taylor was in receipt of these various orders and inquiries and was able to answer them. He replied at some length, treating the subject as exclusively a question of subsistence, which, he said, "is certainly the most important one to be considered." He evidently did not consider the Mexican troops capable of offering serious resistance. His plan was that as soon as enough river steam-boats could be collected, the regular troops, with some of the volunteers, should be sent to Camargo, a point on the Rio Grande about eighty or ninety miles above Matamoros in a straight line, and "establish there a depot and base from which to operate toward the mountains." The remainder of the volunteers he proposed to leave at healthy camps of instruction, to await "the season for more extensive operations." He was of opinion that no column of more than six thousand men could be subsisted on a march from the Rio Grande to Monterey and Saltillo; and that if the inhabitants should prove actively hostile it might be impossible to sustain such a column at Saltillo, still more so to pass beyond that city.

From Camargo he estimated the distance to the city of Mexico to be nearly a thousand miles,[2] and, taking into account the character of the country and the people, he did not believe it practicable to keep open so long a line of communication.

"It is, therefore," he concluded, "my opinion that our operations from this frontier should not look to the city of Mexico, but should be confined to cutting off the northern provinces—an undertaking of comparative facility and assurance of success."[3]

[1] Scott to Taylor, June 12, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 326.

[2] The distance via Monterey, Saltillo, and San Luis Potosí would in reality hardly exceed seven hundred and fifty miles.

[3] Taylor to Adjutant-General, July 2, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 331.

Once more Taylor's report was crossed by an impatient letter from the Secretary of War. Much reliance, he was told, would be placed on his opinions, and the scope of the inquiry was now enlarged.

"If, from all the information you may communicate to the department, as well as that derived from other sources, it should appear that the difficulties and obstacles to the conducting of a campaign from the Rio Grande, the present base of your operations, for any considerable distance into the interior of Mexico, will be very great, the department will consider whether the main invasion should not ultimately take place from some other point on the coast—say *Tampico*, or some other point in the vicinity of *Vera Cruz*. . . . Upon these important points, in addition to those mentioned in my letter of the 8th of June, your opinion and views are desired at the earliest period your duties will permit you to give them. In the mean time the department confidently relies on you to press forward your operations vigorously to the extent of your means, so as to occupy the important points within your reach on the Rio Grande, and in the interior. It is presumed that Monterey, Chihuahua, and other places in your direction, will be taken and held. . . . Your answer to this communication you will please to address directly to the *President of the United States*."[1]

The views of the cabinet were accurately reflected in Marcy's letter. An absolute distrust of General Scott and the permanent officials of the War Department, a determination to take Monterey and Chihuahua (by Taylor's and Wool's troops), and a casting about for some practicable plan of marching to the capital of Mexico (probably by way of Vera Cruz), were the clear outlines of the government policy in the month of July. And while waiting to hear from Taylor, all discussion of strategy was suspended.

On the first of August Taylor replied, as he had been instructed, directly to the President. He had, he said, little to add to his report of the second of July. Whether a large force could be subsisted beyond Monterey must be deter-

[1] Marcy to Taylor, July 9, 1846; *ibid.*, 335. Italics in the original. This letter was drafted in part by Benton, and the rest by the President. Polk's contribution was that which relates to strategy. Benton's to the part of the letter (to be referred to later) which deals with the possibility of opening negotiations for peace. The President considered it "a document of more than ordinary importance," as of course it was.—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 16.)

mined by experiment. If it should prove that a column of ten thousand men could be sustained in provisions at Saltillo, it might advance thence to San Luis Potosí.

"If, on the other hand, a column cannot be sustained beyond Monterey, it will be for the government to determine, from considerations of state, whether a simple occupation of the frontier departments, (including Chihuahua and New Mexico), or, in addition to such occupation, an expedition against the Capital, (by way of Vera Cruz), be most expedient." [1]

Taylor could hardly have been expected, in the absence of more definite information than he then possessed, to answer differently; and it was evidently for the government to decide upon the main strategical features of the war, aided by such knowledge of the facts and such professional advice from the officers of the army and navy as it could secure. To this rather obvious conclusion the cabinet finally came. Their discussions as to a plan of campaign were resumed at the end of August, and the happy thought then occurred to the Secretary of the Navy that his department possessed some information about the possibilities of landing an expedition at Vera Cruz and taking the castle of San Juan de Ulúa. Commodore Conner's despatches were therefore produced, and after reading them it was decided to write to him for more specific information, and again a decision as to strategy was postponed.[2]

Meanwhile California had been taken (quite unknown to the administration)[3] and Kearny had seized New Mexico. Starting from Fort Leavenworth late in the month of June,

[1] Taylor to the President, August 1, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 336–338.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 104 (August 29, 1846).

[3] The news that Sloat had hoisted the American flag at Monterey (California) and that "Frémont with his men had been attacked near St. Francisco, by Castro the Commandant Gen'l of Mexico in California, and that after a short skirmish Castro had retreated," reached the British legation in Washington by despatches from Mexico on August 31. (It had reached the city of Mexico about August 11.) Next morning, the information was sent to the State Department from the legation, with a copy of Sloat's proclamation.—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 108.)

he had marched rapidly southwestward over the well-known and well-travelled Santa Fe trail. Moving in several detachments, his troops were all concentrated on the Arkansas River near Bent's fort, a few miles above the present town of Las Animas, in the state of Colorado, by the end of July. They were still within the limits of the United States. They had marched at the remarkable rate of nearly twenty miles a day for a whole month.

The "Army of the West" then consisted of six troops of the First United States dragoons—Kearny's own regiment—the First regiment (eight companies) of Missouri mounted volunteers, two volunteer batteries of horse artillery, and two companies of volunteer infantry—in all about seventeen hundred men with sixteen guns; but reinforcements had been provided for and were shortly to follow, although nobody expected any real opposition from Mexican troops. The one great and essential difficulty which was anticipated in the operations of Kearny's command lay in the quartermaster's and commissary's departments. How was the army to be fed, and kept clothed and shod? How, in other words, were its supplies to be procured and moved over the hundreds of miles of wilderness that lay between the Missouri and the Rio Grande?

"The army concentrated at Fort Leavenworth," the quartermaster-general reported, "from its proximity to States abounding in supplies and means of transportation, was more readily and speedily put in motion than the others; but its line of operations extending to Santa Fe, a distance of more than eight hundred miles, vast means were required to enable it to move, as well as to keep up its supplies. . . . There have been furnished for the transportation of that army, and its reinforcements and supplies, 459 horses, 3,658 mules, 14,904 oxen, 1,556 wagons, and 516 pack-saddles."[1]

These figures were confessedly incomplete, for the accounts of the officer in charge of the important depot at St. Louis had not been received when this report was prepared, but they indicate the magnitude of Kearny's prepa-

[1] *Report of the Quartermaster-General*, Nov. 24, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 343.

rations and afford a picture of the herds and the long lines of prairie wagons that toiled after the fighting men.

On the second of August the little army crossed the Arkansas into territory which was recognised by the Florida treaty as a part of the Spanish possessions. Kearny professed to regard it as a part of Texas, and therefore of the United States, basing the assertion, of course, on the preposterous claim that the Rio Grande to its source was the Texan boundary.

On the same day that he crossed the river he sent forward to Santa Fe two merchants of Chihuahua who had accompanied his column—Magoffin and Gonzales—with an escort consisting of an officer and twelve dragoons. The officer, Captain Philip St. George Cooke, kept a diary, and has left a lively account of his adventures on the journey. Pushing forward as fast as possible, the party found themselves unable for some time to pass "this wonderfully mobile army," and it was not until the evening of the second day that they got ahead of the "long-legged infantry" volunteers who, singularly enough, led the advance. On the eighth of August Cooke's party saw the first Mexican settlements, and on the twelfth of August they rode under a flag of truce into Santa Fe itself. Their route followed closely that of the present Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and the distance they had travelled may be estimated at fully three hundred miles, a very creditable distance to be accomplished in less than eleven days.

Governor Armijo received Kearny's envoys politely, and promised to send back with them a "commissioner" to meet the American commander. The commissioner selected was a certain Doctor Henry Connelly, an American by birth, who had lived in Chihuahua for many years, where he was engaged in the business of importing goods from the United States.[1] Captain Cooke, accompanied by Doctor Connelly, set out upon his return soon after sunrise on the day following his arrival at Santa Fe. He was assured by the

[1] See biographical sketch of Henry Connelly (afterward governor of New Mexico) in Connelley, *Doniphan's Expedition*, 276–282.

governor that he would be followed by a Mexican force of six thousand men.

Between San Miguel and Las Vegas, sixty or seventy miles back on the trail, Cooke rejoined Kearny, who was rapidly advancing with his wagon-train, artillery and all, over the broken country. Kearny did not stop to discuss matters with the representative of the governor,[1] but pushed rapidly forward, haranguing the people at every settlement, and assuring them that he had come to extend over them the laws of the United States and that Armijo was no longer their governor. Rumors of resistance were received from Mexican and Indian natives, but no enemies were met, the most authentic story being that Armijo with a large force, variously stated at from two thousand to four thousand men, was ready to defend the Apache cañon, about fifteen miles southeast of Santa Fe. One of Kearny's officers relates how, as they advanced, they were met.

"As we approached the ruins of the ancient town of Pecos," he writes, "a large fat fellow, mounted on a mule, came towards us at full speed, and extending his hand to the general, congratulated him on the arrival of himself and army. He said, with a roar of laughter, 'Armijo and his troops have gone to hell, and the Cañon is all clear.' This was the alcalde of the settlement."[2]

On the next day, the eighteenth of August, the little army marched twenty-nine miles into Santa Fe. Passing through the cañon they found an abattis prepared by Armijo, but no other sign of an enemy. As they approached the town, they received a letter from the acting governor offering hospitality; and at sunset the whole of the hungry and very thirsty American force was in the capital of New Mexico, the United States flag was hoisted over the palace, and a salute of thirteen guns was being fired by the artillery.

Governor Armijo, it was learned, had actually collected a certain number of inhabitants with the object of making at

[1] Doctor Connelly, it seems, was sent back to Santa Fe, and it is said that his report as to the number and condition of the American army created a panic among the Mexican officials.—(*Ibid.*, 281.)

[2] Emory's *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance*, 29.

least an ostensible defence, and thus "saving his face"—a thing dear to the Spanish and Oriental mind. Why he did not carry out his purpose is not fully known. All that was ever definitely ascertained was that there were "dissensions" among Armijo's followers, and that he had on the last day disbanded his force and retreated south with about two hundred and seventy men—who formed the Mexican garrison of the territory—and such artillery as he possessed. He abandoned his guns soon afterward, and reached El Paso about the end of August, with only sixty men belonging to the regular cavalry. The rest, who were presidial troops, had deserted.[1]

Armijo himself never seems to have explained his conduct nor (although commissioned as an officer of the Mexican army) to have been called upon to defend it. All sorts of explanations were current in the American army. Cooke, who saw and talked with him only four or five days before his flight, thought him doubtful and irresolute,

"with little or no military experience, distrustful of the loyalty of the population he has habitually fleeced, and of their feeble ignorance which has been much impressed by our long commercial intercourse, . . . halting between loyalty to his army commission, lately bestowed, and a desire to escape the dangers of war upon terms of personal advantage."[2]

Magoffin, one of the men who went with Cooke, told Senator Benton a long time afterward that he himself had persuaded Armijo not to make a stand. Very likely Magoffin did argue with him in this sense, but that he alone prevented any resistance being made is evidently an exaggeration.[3] The truth probably is that Armijo, who had never

[1] Bustamante, *Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, II, 103 *et seq.*

[2] Cooke's *Conquest of New Mexico and California*, 32.

[3] Benton's account of Magoffin's dealings with Armijo and the Comandante General Don Diego Archuleta (whom Benton calls Archuletti) is as absurd and inexact as anything in the *Thirty Years' View*. Magoffin was full of fun, an Irishman by descent and a Kentuckian by birth, and his story doubtless lost nothing in the telling. Benton distorted it further. He also says (which is true) that he took Magoffin to the President and the Secretary of War, who were glad to make use of his services.—(*Thirty Years' View*, II, 683.) It was

seen war, was in a panic and afraid of his own people quite as much as of the Americans; and when it actually came to the point, with the great mass of his men obviously unwilling to fight, his resolution finally failed.

It was not surprising that all sorts of explanations should have been invented to account for Kearny's astonishing success, for his performance was almost unique in the history of war. Cooke, an educated soldier, sums it up as follows:

"The 'Army of the West' marched from Bent's Fort with only rations calculated to last, by uninterrupted and most rapid marches, until it should arrive at Santa Fe. Is this War? Tested by the rules of the science, this expedition is anomalous, not to say Quixotic. A colonel's command, called an army, marches eight hundred miles beyond its base, its communication liable to be cut off by the slightest effort of the enemy—mostly through a desert—the whole distance almost totally destitute of resources, to conquer a territory of 250,000 square miles. . . . This is the art of War as practiced in America."[1]

But the true and sufficient explanation was that Kearny was an officer of great experience; he knew thoroughly what his men could do; he had excellent information as to the character and temper of the people among whom he was going; and he judged with perfect accuracy what were the obstacles he would have to meet.

Shortly after entering Santa Fe, Kearny issued a proclamation declaring his intention to hold the department of New Mexico, on both sides of the Rio Grande, as a part of the United States, and announcing that he was instructed to respect the church, and to protect the persons and property of all peaceable inhabitants.[2] He also promulgated what

on the evening of June 15 that Magoffin was brought by Benton to the White House, and on June 17 he had an extended interview with Polk and Marcy. "It was concluded," the former noted, "that he could be useful in furnishing supplies for the army, and conciliating the people of the Northern Provinces of Mexico to the U. S., and with that view he was informed that the Secretary of War would on to-morrow give him letters to Col. Kearney who was in command of the expedition to Santa Fe, and also to the officer who might be in command of an expedition to Chihuahua, requesting them to avail themselves of his services."—(Polk's *Diary*, I, 472, 475.)

[1] Cooke, 39.

[2] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 170. He had issued a previous proclamation on July 31, just before crossing the Arkansas River, in which he an-

he called an "Organic Law for the territory of New Mexico," which professed on its face to have been ordained and established by the government of the United States.[1] Having thus settled civil affairs to his own satisfaction, but having in reality sown what proved to be fruitful seeds of discord and debate, Kearny took his way with about three hundred men to cross the continent to California. He left behind him the Missouri volunteers, under Colonel Doniphan, and these were soon afterward reinforced by a second regiment, under Colonel Sterling Price, who became military governor.

Doniphan also left Santa Fe later in the year on a march to Chihuahua, leaving but a reduced garrison in New Mexico. Early in 1847 a rather formidable revolt broke out, which Price put down, not without considerable loss of life, in the course of a fortnight.[2] Thenceforward there was no attempt by the Mexican government or people to retake the territory. California and New Mexico were securely held, and the authorities at Washington were free to devote their undivided attention to "conquering a peace."[3]

nounced that he entered New Mexico "for the purpose of seeking union with and ameliorating the condition of its inhabitants." Nothing was then said of boundaries or of permanent annexation.—(*Ibid.*, 168.)

[1] *Ibid.*, 177–229.

[2] See details in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 520–538.

[3] For Kearny's march to Santa Fe, reference may be made to Ripley, I, 270–281; Cooke's *Conquest of New Mexico*, etc., 1–70; Emory's *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance* (Sen. Doc. 7, 30 Cong., 1 sess.), 15–45; Connelley, *Doniphan's Expedition*, 129–220; Edwards, *Campaign in New Mexico*, 1–25; Cutts's *Conquest of California and New Mexico*, 32–67; Twitchell's *Military Occupation of New Mexico*, 38–90.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### SANTA ANNA RETURNS FROM EXILE—THE WILMOT PROVISO

SANTA ANNA, watching from his post of observation at Havana, had doubtless seen with satisfaction the downfall of Herrera's government, and he must have awaited with still greater interest the inevitable moment when Paredes should, in his turn, be driven from the seat of power. In the spring of 1846 that moment could not have seemed distant. Mexico presented a picture of anarchy. On the eve of a long-threatened foreign war the Treasury was empty, the credit of the nation utterly gone, the army ready for mutiny, the local assemblies of the departments muttering discontent, and every branch of the government involved in confusion.

General Paredes, shortly after assuming the position of President *ad interim*, had issued a manifesto in which he drew a rhetorical but not very overcharged picture of the state of public affairs.

"The quarrels and exigencies of parties," he wrote, "absorb all the strength of the government. A year has passed since the revolution which put an end to a ruinous dictatorship; and the most urgent affairs of the State are still to be disposed of. Where is the revision of the acts of the provisional government? Where are the political reforms? Where are the improvements in administration? Where is the regulation of the Treasury? What has become of so many promises and hopes? Time has passed in idle and sterile debates. Indecision and weakness alone have characterized the republic and the government. In consequence, the United States have dared to commit, before the whole world, the usurpation of the state of Texas; the revenues of the nation are involved; the scanty food of the soldier is begged from the hand of usury; and parties are constantly more and

more divided, men's minds more and more disturbed, and everywhere are the symptoms of approaching dissolution. Order is precarious, peace insecure, and the nation, in the midst of the anarchy which consumes it and the chaos which surrounds it, moves toward dissolution and the fear of death."[1]

To remedy these evils, Paredes promised to maintain order, to uphold the Constitution, and to support the institutions which the new Congress was to adopt, and which were to rest upon the two great principles of liberty and independence. These were brave words, but they satisfied nobody.

The chief adviser of the government—although not in office—was believed to be Lúcas Alaman, who early in the year had begun the publication of a newspaper which openly advocated the establishment of a monarchy under a foreign prince. This of itself was enough to discredit fatally the administration. The newspapers throughout the country declaimed against undoing the great work of the war of independence, and against the loss of that freedom for which Mexicans had sacrificed so much. The protests of Paredes and his ministers availed nothing. Thenceforward they were everywhere regarded as ready to sacrifice the republic.

This conviction of a monarchist plot was only heightened by the decree summoning the new Congress. The plan of San Luis Potosí, under which Paredes had been made temporary President, had provided that in this Congress *all classes of society* should be represented; and the government, taking literally this unfortunate phrase, decided to make up the new body from the representatives of classes. The call was issued in January, 1846, and in a hundred and fifty-six paragraphs set out a unique method of election. The new Congress was to consist of one hundred and sixty members forming a single chamber. Of these the clergy was to have twenty members, the army twenty, land-owners and farmers thirty-eight, and commerce twenty. Mining, manufacturing, and the literary and artistic professions

[1] Manifesto of January 10, 1846; *Nuevo Bernal Díaz*, I, 115.

were each to have fourteen representatives, and the judges and the government employees as a class were each to have ten. The archbishop of Mexico and ten bishops named in the decree, besides members from certain cathedral chapters, were to represent the clergy. The army was to name its own representatives, of whom five must be generals of division, and the rest officers not below the rank of lieutenant-colonel. The other members of the Congress were distributed according to what were supposed to be the proportions of the several classes in the various departments. Laborers had no vote; but land-owners, merchants, manufacturers, and mine-owners were to meet separately and choose representatives of their several classes by an elaborate system of secondary elections. The literary and artistic professions—which included lawyers, doctors, and college professors—were to vote directly, and so were the judges. Government employees were to select from lists submitted to them by the government.[1]

Alaman was universally believed to be the author of this strange scheme, and his unpopularity arising, in part, from his known monarchical tendencies and in part from the share he was supposed to have had in the shooting of President Guerrero, was enough of itself to insure the unpopularity of the newly begotten Congress. But even without this added weight a method of election which departed so far from the ideals of popular representation could not fail to be the object of attack, and the publication of the decree proved to be "a match thrown into a heap of combustibles."[2]

The constituent Congress, upon the very face of the decree, was to be mainly representative of property interests. The opponents of the government asserted that it was also designed to be an instrument for establishing a monarchy. Everywhere the press denounced it in unmeasured terms.

During the first months of the administration the press had enjoyed unusual freedom, but its attacks had at length become unbearable. A government circular was therefore

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 105-119. [2] Rivera, *Hist. de Jalapa*, III, 737.

issued on March 14, 1846, declaring that all discussion of the form of government must cease; and again, on March 21, another circular was issued declaring that a stop must be put to "this venomous discussion," inasmuch as the writers and the press had lost all sense of prudence and moderation. At the same time it was thought necessary to announce officially that President Paredes was personally in favor of a republican form of government.[1] A month later another decree was issued, in which the President referred to the many evils caused by the abuses of the press, and directed the governors of the several departments to proceed against offenders by executive measures—that is, without resorting to the courts. The authors, editors, and printers of any document which, directly or indirectly, favored the views of an invader of the territory, or supported any change in the established order, or attacked the authorities, were to be punished as the governors of the several departments might see fit.[2]

Having thus attempted to muzzle the press, Paredes next set to work to improve the condition of public affairs. Men without visible means of support (*vagos*) were to be summarily examined and sent to the army.[3] Payments of all debts due by the national Treasury were to be suspended.[4] Salaries and pensions were to be reduced.[5] At the same time, the church was called upon to contribute two hundred thousand dollars a month for the support of the government, which, however, the church protested its inability to pay.[6] These were measures not precisely calculated to enhance the popularity of the government.

As early as the beginning of March, Santa Anna thought that the time had come when an effort might hopefully be made for his restoration to power. He accordingly wrote to his friends in Mexico adopting the anti-monarchical "cry." He solemnly expressed alarm at the preparations which the former masters of the country were making to support the

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 557.
[2] Decree of April 18, 1846; Dublan y Lozano, V, 121.
[3] Decree of April 23, 1846; *ibid.*, 122.
[4] Decree of May 2, 1846; *ibid.*, 123.
[5] Decree of May 7, 1846; *ibid.*, 124.
[6] Rivera, *Hist. de Jalapa*, III, 780.

designs of Paredes, Alaman, and the other monarchists. Indeed, he hinted, he no longer felt himself safe in a Spanish colony. He therefore urged an effort to restore the Constitution of 1824, though he neglected to recall the fact that he himself had destroyed it. He admitted, of course, that he had at one time entertained other opinions respecting that instrument; but he protested that as he now saw "the love of provincial liberties" and the principles of democracy prevailing everywhere, he had become convinced that no permanent system could be established which did not recognize these tendencies. A centralized system, he declared, had dissatisfied the northern departments and led to their separation; and he even asserted that he had been really (though secretly) endeavoring to bring about federalism in 1844, when driven from the country. He therefore urged his friends to unite with the liberals under Gómez Farías, but at the same time to act with the utmost caution, as the army was opposed to federalism.

As for himself, he said, he was ready to "support the claims of the masses, leaving the people entirely at liberty to organize their system of government and to regulate their affairs in the manner which may please them best"; and in maintenance of these opinions he was resolved to die. All he asked as a reward for his services, was the honor of sanctioning the restored Constitution of 1824, whereupon he would forever retire from public life.[1] At the same time, he drew and distributed proposed forms of a pronunciamiento to be adopted by the garrisons throughout the country.

However, no important rising occurred until the twentieth of May, when a part of the garrison of Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, pronounced for Santa Anna. The form of pronunciamiento which he had drafted for the use of his adherents was very accurately copied, three additional articles only, relating chiefly to local conditions, being tacked on at the end.[2]

[1] Santa Anna to Señor D., March 8, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 36.
[2] See Santa Anna's draft annexed to the letter just quoted. The plan of Guadalajara is printed in *Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, II, 39–44.

The government asserted that the outbreak in Guadalajara was insignificant, and sent a small body of troops under General Pacheco to suppress it; but there were outbreaks at about the same time in Sonora, Sinaloa, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Michoacan, while the Indian tribes were devastating parts of the northwestern departments. Yucatan had again declared its independence in January,[1] and neither Pacheco nor any of the other commanding officers succeeded in putting down the various risings. The press, in spite of the threats of the government, began quite openly to declare that Santa Anna was the only man who could restore peace and order, and the news of the Mexican disasters on the Rio Grande strengthened their demands for his return to power.[2]

In the meantime, the ministry of Paredes was dropping to pieces. Gorostiza, who had served as Minister of the Treasury, resigned, dissatisfied with the measures against freedom of the press. Almonte, Minister of War, was made minister to France, being suspected of Santanista leanings; but he only went as near Paris as Havana, where he joined Santa Anna. He was succeeded by Tornel, Santa Anna's former minister, who was vehemently suspected of being a monarchist.

However, the Congress selected to represent the classes and not the people of Mexico, under the call of January, 1846, was permitted to assemble peaceably on the sixth of June, ex-President Bustamante being made its presiding officer. Paredes appeared before it, and in a vain effort to turn the current, again declared himself in favor of a republican form of government. He was, of course, elected President *ad interim*,[3] General Bravo being chosen Vice-

[1] *Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, I, 125.

[2] Rivera, *Hist. de Jalapa*, III, 745-755; *Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, II, 10. Santa Anna, it seems, had had some idea of going to Matamoros and taking Arista's place in opposing Taylor, but his friends dissuaded him. They all agreed that if Arista beat Taylor Santa Anna's return to Mexico would be difficult if not impossible.—(Rivera, III, 780.)

[3] Dublan y Lozano, V, 133. The vote was not unanimous. Paredes had 57 votes out of a total of 81, Bravo 13, Herrera 7, the rest scattering. It will be observed that a bare quorum of members was present and voting.—(Rivera, III, 762.)

President, but it was too late. His administration, struggling against constant ill-success, lasted for only two months more.

Toward the latter part of July he thought himself strong enough to spare three thousand men for service in northern Mexico, and these troops actually set out on their march, having, it seems, been equipped by means of money "borrowed" from the clergy. The last of them had hardly been gone a week when, on August 4, 1846, General Salas, commanding a force of about a thousand men—also destined for the Rio Grande, but temporarily quartered in the citadel of the city of Mexico—pronounced for Santa Anna, and the whole fabric of the Paredes government instantaneously collapsed. It had been in power a little over seven months.

Nominally, this latest revolution was intended to overthrow the centralist and establish the federalist principles, but actually its object was only to bring Santa Anna and his friends back to power.[1] By the terms of the "Plan of the Citadel" put forward by Salas and his men, which was also based upon Santa Anna's draft pronunciamiento of the previous spring, a new constituent Congress, elected in accordance with the laws which regulated the elections in 1824, was to be summoned; Santa Anna was to be recalled and made commander-in-chief of all the national forces; the executive, in the interval before the meeting of the Congress, was to take all measures that might be necessary and and proper to sustain with due dignity (*decoro*) the national flag; the existence of the army was to be guaranteed, and it was to be fostered and sustained; and any person who should try to impede the meeting of the new Congress, or to dissolve it, or to suspend its sittings, or who should refuse to recognize its acts, was to be declared a traitor.[2] Who was to be the executive was not stated, but it was, of course, understood that it would be the commander-in-chief.

[1] The hollowness of the pretence of federalism as a basis for this revolt is convincingly discussed in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 570.

[2] Dublan y Lozano, V, 144.

Salas therefore, acting as commander-in-chief in the absence of Santa Anna, assumed the executive power and issued a decree summoning a new Congress. Next day he issued another, repealing all laws interfering with the liberty of the press, and a week later another, repealing the decree of May 7, 1846, which had cut off twenty-five per cent from salaries and pensions.[1] And having thus placated the press, the army and the office-holders, he sat down to wait until Santa Anna should be ready to return to Mexico and take over the command.

During all this time the American administration had been doing whatever lay in its power to sow discord among Mexicans, to induce the people of the frontier states to secede from the central government, and to create a sentiment in favor of an early peace. But one very great difficulty in the way of creating a popular feeling of friendship to the United States lay, it was believed, in the strong religious feeling that prevailed in Mexico. The war had been represented in the Mexican newspapers as being, on the part of the United States, a war of rapine and plunder, a war of "impiety" conducted by heretics, who were bent on robbing the churches and destroying the true religion. To counteract these representations various methods were adopted.

In the first place, it was suggested in Washington that Catholic priests might be obtained to go with the army as chaplains,[2] and thus allay the fears of the Mexicans as to their religion and the property of their church. Accordingly the Catholic bishops of St. Louis and New York were sent for to the White House and asked to designate for the purpose a few priests who spoke Spanish. Bishop Hughes,

[1] Decrees of August 6, 7, and 15, 1846; *ibid.*, 146, 153, 155. He also issued a manifesto on August 6, explaining that a return to the Constitution of 1824 was the only means of removing the evils which were afflicting the country: the "horrible disorder" of the Treasury, the demoralisation of the army, and so forth.—(*México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 572.)

[2] There was at that time no authority of law for commissioning army chaplains, but they were "employed" on the same legal footing as teamsters, couriers, etc.

of New York, with the ready patriotism he always exhibited, not only promised his assistance, but told the President that he knew the archbishop of Mexico personally and would be willing himself to visit Mexico if the government so desired.[1]

In the next place, a reassuring proclamation in Spanish, intended to be distributed by General Taylor, was drawn up in Washington, in which the same note was sounded.

> "We come," it ran, "to obtain reparation for repeated wrongs and injuries, we come to obtain indemnity for the past and security for the future, we come to overthrow the tyrants who have destroyed your liberties; but we come to make no war upon the people of Mexico. . . . Your religion, your altars and churches, the property of your churches and citizens, the emblems of your faith and its ministers, shall be protected and remain inviolate. Hundreds of our army, and hundreds of thousands of our people are members of the Catholic church. In every state, and in nearly every city and village of our Union, Catholic churches exist, and the priests perform their holy functions in peace and security."[2]

And in all the instructions to the commanding officers at the front the idea of conciliating the Mexican people and inducing them to remain neutral was reiterated.

But the chief reliance of the President was on the exiled Santa Anna, who, as he rightly judged, would still play an important part in the affairs of Mexico. The day, there-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 408–411. Archbishop Posada y Garduno, the first archbishop appointed for Mexico by the Holy See since the revolution, was Bishop Hughes's acquaintance. He was dead at the time of the conversation above mentioned, so that the proposed visit to Mexico would have been fruitless. C. M. Bustamante says that the archbishop was extremely fat and never took any exercise, and that his death, on April 30, 1846, was attributed to over-indulgence in candy and julienne soup!—(*Nuevo Bernal Diaz*, II, 15.) President Polk's course in employing the Catholic clergy to serve as chaplains was violently denounced by a Presbyterian minister, who was also, incidentally, a disappointed office-seeker. The President, for reasons not very much in favor with Presidents in the twentieth century, declined to enter into a newspaper controversy with this man, but expressed himself freely in his diary. "I have met with no man during my administration," he wrote, "among the numerous office-seekers who have been me, for whom I have so profound a contempt."—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 188–191; III, 103–105.) See also, for some further details as to the employment of Catholic priests in the army, Curtis's *Buchanan*, II, 627.

[2] See the form of proclamation sent by Marcy to Taylor, June 4, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 284.

fore, that war was declared, the following "private and confidential" order was sent to Commodore Conner, enclosed with the general order directing him to institute a blockade of the Gulf ports: "*Commodore: If Santa Anna endeavors to enter the Mexican ports, you will allow him to pass freely.*"

President Polk had by no means forgotten the long and highly interesting conversations he had had with Colonel Atocha in the preceding February. Atocha had assured him that Santa Anna expected to return to power shortly; that he was in favor of a treaty which should give Texas, New Mexico, and Upper California to the United States upon payment to Mexico of thirty million dollars; that before this could be done the United States must display a strong force on the border, ready to strike; that Santa Anna must have money to sustain himself; and that "with half a million in hand" he could make the treaty. The first thing to be done, if the programme was to be carried out, was evidently to restore Santa Anna to power, and Polk determined to facilitate the restoration by all the means within his reach.

The force on the borders had already been provided for, and all that was needed further from the American government in order to carry out Atocha's plan (in case Santa Anna should return to Mexico) was the ready money to enable him to "sustain himself." The President, therefore, early in the spring and before any acts of hostility had been committed, consulted several members of Congress in reference to a proposed appropriation of a million dollars to enable him to conduct negotiations with Mexico. In general the proposal was favorably received. It was not intended by the President to make a secret payment, but to offer Mexico "to pay down a half million or a million dollars" immediately on the signing of a treaty. Calhoun, however, objected. He said he feared it might embarrass the settlement of the Oregon question if (as was almost certain) the purpose of the proposed appropriation became known; and Allen, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Com-

mittee of the Senate, told Polk that without Calhoun's co-operation the measure could hardly pass, and that it had better be postponed for a few days.[1]

There the matter rested until the beginning of the month of July, when, the Oregon question having been finally settled, the President had a conversation one morning with Senator Benton and handed him a copy of the proclamation which Taylor had been ordered to issue in Mexico. Benton promised, at the President's request, to submit his views in writing as to the manner of conducting the war, and a few days afterward did so. His suggestions amounted to this: that Taylor should, in the first place, intimate informally to the Mexican generals what the peaceful wishes and purposes of the American government were, and should express his readiness to forward to Washington any statements of a Mexican willingness to "negotiate for honorable peace." In the second place, Taylor was to do all he could with individuals, to induce them to wish success to the invasion; and with the separate departments, to induce them to declare their independence of the central government. Taylor at the same time was to press his military operations. "Policy and force are to be combined; and the fruits of the former will be prized as highly as those of the latter."

This characteristic effusion was adopted by the President, and inserted in a letter of inquiry to Taylor, who was very cool in his reply on the subject.[2] But, on reflection, the President must have seen that Benton's methods of inducing the Mexicans to negotiate could hardly be expected to promise very practical results. He therefore caused a note to be addressed directly to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, again offering to send a minister to Mexico "with instructions and full powers to conclude a treaty of peace which shall adjust all the questions in dispute between the two republics."[3]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, I, 303–317 (March 25–April 3, 1846).

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 5, 16. For Taylor's reply see H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 336–338.

[3] Buchanan to Minister of Foreign Relations, July 27, 1846; Sen. Doc. 107, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 2.

In so doing, the President was following the advice offered by Webster a month previously in a speech in the Senate.

"I would advise," he said, "if I were called on to give advice, that this Government should tender a formal solemn embassy to Mexico. The two reasons which would influence me are, in the first place, Mexico is weak and we are strong; it is a war, therefore, on her part, against great odds; and, in the next place, Mexico is a neighbor, a weak neighbor, a republic formed upon our own model, who, when she threw off the dominion of old Spain, was influenced throughout mainly by our example. . . . Nobody can wish to see her fall; but Mexico must hear the suggestions of reason. She must listen to terms of peace; this she ought to know. And if her government be not hopelessly stupid and infatuated, they must be aware that this is her true interest. Nothing can exceed, I have always thought, the obstinacy and senselessness manifested by Mexico in refusing for so many years to acknowledge the independence of Texas. . . . Mexico must be taught that it is necessary for her to treat for peace upon considerations which belong to the present state of things. We have just claims upon her, claims acknowledged by herself, in the most solemn form of treaty stipulations. She ought to make provision for those claims; in short, she must be brought to justice." [1]

Buchanan's note tendering "a formal solemn embassy" was sent through Commodore Conner, then blockading Vera Cruz; but he was warned that if the Mexican government should accept the proposal, and at the same time (as was quite likely) ask for an armistice pending negotiations, the blockade must not be raised, it being the President's intention to prosecute the war with the utmost vigor until a treaty of peace was signed, and also ratified by Mexico.[2]

The renewed offer to Mexico to treat of peace naturally revived the notion of having ready money in hand with which to smooth the way to making a bargain, and the advice of Benton, who had for the moment become the President's great friend, was again sought. Benton read and approved Buchanan's note to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations; and then the President reminded him of

[1] Speech on Volunteer Force, June 24, 1846. Text in Webster's *Works*, V, 157.

[2] Buchanan to Conner, July 27, 1846; Sen. Doc. 107, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 3.

the secret appropriations made in Jefferson's time for the purchase of Louisiana and for the purchase of the Floridas.

"I told Col. Benton," the President recorded, "that I had but little doubt that by paying that sum in hand at the signature of a Treaty we might procure California and such a boundary as we wished, and that in the present impoverished condition of Mexico the knowledge that such a sum would be paid in hand might induce Mexico to Treat, when she might not otherwise do so. Col. Benton approved the suggestion and advised that I should see some members of the committee of Foreign affairs on the subject."[1]

Within the next week the President talked with Senator McDuffie, who had recently become chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and with Cass and Archer, both members of the same committee and the latter a leading Whig, and he also discussed the matter fully with his cabinet.

At the time of these conversations, the President knew nothing about the probabilities of making any treaty with Mexico except what he had been told by Atocha, and what he could infer from the notorious facts concerning conditions in California and the distress of the Mexican Treasury. He had, however, some weeks before taken measures to ascertain directly what were the views of Santa Anna upon this important point.

The messenger he employed was Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, of the United States navy, a nephew of John Slidell, the minister to Mexico. Mackenzie appears to have been selected mainly because of his knowledge of the Spanish language, for his coolness and good judgment in an emergency could hardly have been relied on.[2]

The orders given Mackenzie relative to visiting Santa

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 60 (July 26, 1846).

[2] Mackenzie in 1842 had been the principal actor in a most unfortunate tragedy. While in command of the United States brig *Somers* on a voyage home from the west coast of Africa he discovered a project of mutiny. A midshipman and two of the crew were seized and put in irons, tried by some sort of improvised court-martial, and hanged four days before reaching the island of St. Thomas. The midshipman was Philip Spencer and happened to be a son of the Secretary of War. This fact gave the unhappy affair the greatest notoriety, and caused loud demands for Mackenzie's punishment. He was, in the spring of 1843, tried by court-martial on charges of murder and acquitted.

Anna were purely verbal, and were given to him by the President in person at a conference at which John Slidell was also present. As noted by Mackenzie on the evening of the conversation, the President stated that he desired to terminate hostilities speedily; that in order to attain this object he would be glad to see the military despotism of Paredes overthrown and replaced by a government more in harmony with the wishes and true interests of the Mexican people; and that he believed Santa Anna was the man who best united the high qualifications necessary to establish such a government. The President said he believed Santa Anna could not desire the prolongation of a disastrous war, and for this reason orders had been already given to the blockading squadron to allow him to return freely to his country. If Santa Anna, on his return to power, would announce his readiness to treat for peace, the President would consent to the suspension of active hostilities by land, and would send a minister to Mexico to settle all existing difficulties on liberal terms. In making such a treaty the President proposed to ask Mexico to cede, "for an ample consideration in ready money," parts of her northern territory; and he considered this would be to the advantage of Mexico by restoring her finances, consolidating her government and institutions, building up her power and prosperity, and protecting her against future encroachments, thus contributing to the greatness and happiness both of Mexico and the United States.

Mackenzie reached Havana on the evening of July 5, 1846, and called next day to see Santa Anna, who invited him to return early the following morning. On July 7 he called accordingly, and remained with the illustrious exile for three hours. The conversation began by Mackenzie's reading and translating the memorandum he had made of the President's instructions. Santa Anna expressed his thanks for the order that had been given to permit him to return to Mexico, talked of the kindness shown him by President Jackson and Mr. Forsyth in 1837, and stated that his intentions, if he should again be restored to power,

were "to govern in the interest of the masses instead of parties, and classes." "Among the measures of reform," says Mackenzie, "which he contemplated, was reducing the wealth and power of the clergy, and the establishment of free trade."

They then discussed a possible permanent boundary-line, which, Mackenzie said, ought to start from a given point on the Rio Grande and thence run west to the Pacific, so as to take in at least the port of San Francisco, in California. Mackenzie went on to say that the United States would retain, from what they had already conquered, so much as would be deemed sufficient to give them a permanent boundary, but they meant to pay liberally for whatever might be retained

During the conversation Santa Anna drew up a memorandum, which he permitted Mackenzie to copy, and which (in an English translation) was embodied in the latter's report as follows:

"Senor Santa Ana says: that he deplores the situation of his country; that being in power, he would not hesitate to make concessions rather than to see Mexico ruled by a foreign prince, which the monarchists are endeavoring to introduce; that being restored to his country, he would enter into negotiations to arrange a peace by means of a treaty of limits; that he especially prefers a friendly arrangement to the ravages of war which must be calamitous for his country: that although the republicans of Mexico labour to recall him and place him at the head of the government, they are opposed by the monarchists, headed by Paredes and Bravo: That he desires that republican principles should triumph in Mexico, and that an entirely liberal constitution should be established there; and this is now his programme: That if the government of the United States shall promote his patriotic desires, he offers to respond with such a peace as has been described. He desires that the mediation of England and France may not be accepted; and that every effort should be directed towards promoting his return to power in Mexico, by protecting the Republican party. To attain this object he considers it necessary that General Taylor's army should advance to the city of Saltillo, which is a good military position, compelling General Paredes to fight as he considers his overthrow easy: and this being effected General Taylor may advance to San Louis Potosi, which movement will compell Mexicans of all parties to recall Santa Ana.

"General Santa Ana also desires that the greatest secrecy be observed concerning these communications, and that they be only communicated by the bearer as far as may be necessary, since his countrymen not appreciating his benevolent intentions to free them from war and other evils might form a doubtful opinion of his patriotism. That all the American cruisers should be directed under the strictest injunctions of secrecy not to impede his return to Mexico. He likewise enjoins that the people of the towns occupied by the American army should not be maltreated, lest their hatred should be excited. He considers it important to attack Ullos, and judges that it would be best first to take the city, whose walls are not strong: the disembarkation of three or four thousand men would effect it easily. He considers important the occupation of Tampico, and wonders that it has not been effected, since it might be so easily done. The climate is healthy in October and continues so until March. Finally he desires that his good repute may be protected by the newspapers of the United States, and that they represent him as the Mexican who best understands the interests of his country, and as the republican who will never compromise with the monarchists, nor ever be in favor of foreign and European intervention. He says that it will be well not to blockade the ports of Yuchatan, as he counts upon that state, being in communication with its authorities; and perhaps he will transfer himself to that point, if circumstances prove favourable."

Mackenzie added that he thought these military suggestions so important that he purposed to go at once to Taylor and impart them to him.[1]

The confidential report of this extraordinary conversation, which Santa Anna so naturally thought might lead his countrymen to misjudge his benevolent intentions, reached Washington on August 3, 1846. It does not appear to have ever been placed upon the regular files of the State Department, and it was carefully preserved from the knowledge of Congress. Indeed, Polk was very angry with Mackenzie for having read to Santa Anna what purported to be a message from the President; but he did not in his diary deny the correctness of the memorandum of the conversation (of which he himself had made no note at the time),

[1] The full report of July 7, 1846, is printed in Reeves, *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*, 299–307. Mackenzie did visit Taylor, with whom he had a long private interview, about July 20; and then went back to Washington.—(Meade, I, 116.)

although he thought that if it were published it would exhibit him "in a ridiculous attitude."[1]

Santa Anna later on denied Mackenzie's statements. He had had, he admitted, one conversation with the American consul, who called with an interpreter some time after the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca; but he had refused to talk with him except through Almonte as interpreter. Almonte, he asserted, had been present at the whole interview, and would testify that, in reply to a question as to what course Santa Anna would take if he returned to Mexico and was again made President, the latter had said that in case that honor was done him he would loyally sustain the cause of his native land, whatever might be the result of the struggle.[2] If, therefore, Santa Anna was to be believed, no such conversation as that related by Mackenzie ever took place. But Mackenzie, whatever his faults, was a man of honor, and it can hardly be supposed that he invented the interview which he reported so much in detail. At any rate, his report was accepted as true by the American administration.

On the very next day after receiving Mackenzie's report President Polk sent a confidential message to the Senate, urging their consideration of the project, which he had already discussed with various senators, to appropriate a sum of money to be paid down to Mexico upon the signature of a treaty. He had been, he said, anxious to avoid war; he deemed it his duty once more "to extend the olive-branch to Mexico"; the chief difficulty to be anticipated in any negotiation would lie in the adjustment of a boundary; and if Mexico was willing to cede a part of her territory, the United States ought to be willing to pay a fair price for it. But Mexico might not be willing to wait for payment of the whole purchase-money till the treaty was ratified by the Senate and an appropriation was made by Congress. It might therefore be necessary to advance a part of the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 201 (January 8, 1848).
[2] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, etc., 18.

consideration at once, the disbursement, if made, to be accounted for at the Treasury not as secret service money, but like other expenditures. Two precedents existed—the acts of Congress of February 26, 1803, and February 13, 1806, passed during Jefferson's administration, one to enable the President to obtain Louisiana, the other to obtain the Floridas. If the Senate in executive session approved, then an act (which should not on its face express its real purpose) might be passed making the appropriation. Not a word was said of either Atocha or Mackenzie.

A secret debate over the President's message continued in the Senate for two days, and after various amendments had been voted down a resolution was adopted, by a vote of 33 to 19, expressing the opinion that it would be advisable for Congress to appropriate a sum of money to enable the President to conclude a treaty with Mexico, to be used by him only in the event that the treaty should call for the expenditure of the money.

The next step was to get a bill passed by both houses making the appropriation. The President thought the Senate resolutions ought to be sufficient warrant for the passage of such a bill, but the Whigs refused to support it in either house unless the President publicly asked for the money, and Polk decided to yield. On the morning of Saturday, the eighth of August, an open message was therefore sent to the Senate and House of Representatives, in which the subject was presented in general terms, but in nearly the same language as that used in the confidential message sent to the Senate in the early part of the week. All reference to the diplomatic correspondence which had been sent to the Senate was omitted. The sum of two million dollars was named.

A joint resolution to adjourn at noon on Monday, the tenth of August, had already been adopted, so that extremely prompt action was essential if the President's recommendations were to be carried into effect at that session of Congress, and on the Saturday morning a short bill was introduced appropriating two million dollars "for the purpose of

defraying any extraordinary expenses which may be incurred in the intercourse between the United States and foreign nations." The matter having been immediately considered in Committee of the Whole, a motion was made and carried in the House that all debate should terminate in two hours.

The bill was at once attacked upon the ground that it was indefinite, and that the sum appropriated might be used for any purpose whatever relating to foreign nations. Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, said that he inferred that the President intended to call upon Congress to sanction a new and indefinite acquisition of Southern territory; and such an acquisition Winthrop opposed, as he objected to extending the slave-holding territory of the Union. The next speaker after Winthrop was David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, an inconspicuous member of the House, who, as he himself said, had strongly supported the policy of Texan annexation during the presidential campaign of 1844, and was regarded as a regular supporter of the administration. He had no objection, he declared, to the acquisition of fresh territory provided it was done on proper conditions. On the contrary, he was most earnestly desirous that a portion of the territory on the Pacific, including the Bay of San Francisco, should come into our possession by fair and honorable means. But whatever territory might be acquired, he was opposed to the extension of slavery. If free territory came in, God forbid that he should be the means of placing this institution upon it! He therefore offered as an amendment to the bill the following addition:

"*Provided*, That, as an express and fundamental condition of the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted."[1]

[1] The authorship of this justly celebrated proposal, which summed up in a few words the policy to which the people of the Northern states were becoming more and more definitely committed, has been disputed. There is evidence to show that the proviso was really drawn by Jacob Brinkerhoff, a

Wilmot was followed by Washington Hunt, a Whig of New York, who declared himself opposed to the addition of any more territory to the Union except on the terms proposed by Wilmot. John Quincy Adams followed Hunt, and very unexpectedly declared that if the bill were amended so as to specify that the money was to be used for negotiating peace with Mexico, he would vote for it even without the adoption of the Wilmot proviso, although he approved of Wilmot's object with his whole heart. He desired peace, and if territory belonging to Mexico were acquired by the United States, slavery would not come with it, because slavery had been abolished in Mexico and could not be introduced except it were provided for in the treaty itself. He was delighted that it was the desire of the President to make peace, and in that he most heartily concurred. "I would give two millions, and two millions added to that, and I do not know how much more, if it were necessary, to carry into effect his purpose of making peace."

The bill was thereupon amended to meet Adams's suggestion of making it expressly apply to a treaty of peace with the republic of Mexico. The vote next came up on the Wilmot proviso, which was adopted by 83 to 64, and the bill in that form was passed by a vote of 85 to 79, a number of Northern Democrats voting with the Whigs in its favor.

On the Monday morning the House bill was taken up in the Senate, and Lewis, of Alabama, moved to strike out the Wilmot proviso. Davis, of Massachusetts, an anti-slavery Whig, opposed the motion to strike out, and, although warned that but twenty minutes remained before final adjournment, continued talking until the hour arrived for the close of the session and it was known that the House of Representatives had adjourned.

"The adjournment," says Adams, "was fixed at noon for the convenience of members, many of whom departed in the railway cars for

Democratic member of the House from Ohio, and that Brinkerhoff refrained from offering it because he had voted against the annexation of Texas. Wilmot, on the contrary, had always been "regular." See Garrison's *Westward Extension*, 255 *et seq.*

Baltimore at that hour. . . . As the hand of the clock was on the line of twelve, the Speaker declared the House adjourned to the first Monday in December. At that moment John Davis was prosing in the Senate about the two millions Peace bill, with David Wilmot's anti-slavery proviso, which thereby fell through."[1]

Davis pleased nobody by his course. The anti-slavery people were desperately angry with him, because they believed that if the bill had been put to a vote in the Senate in the form in which it came from the House it would have passed. The administration was equally offended at the defeat of the measure in which they were interested; but with his usual secretiveness and self-control the President made no sign. He contented himself by expressing freely in his diary his views concerning Wilmot's "mischievous and foolish amendment" and Davis's "disreputable expedient of speaking against time." He also took occasion to note for his own future reference, more fully than before, his real object in asking the appropriation.

"It was this. Mexico is indebted to the U. S. in a large sum, which she is unable to pay. There is also a disputed question of boundary. The two Countries are now engaged in War. When peace is made the only indemnity which the U. S. can have will be a cession of territory. The U. S. desires to acquire Upper California, New Mexico, and perhaps some territory South of these Provinces. For a suitable cession of territory we are willing to assume the debts to our own citizens & to pay an additional consideration. My information induces the belief that Mexico would be willing to settle the difficulty in this manner. No Government, however, it is believed, is strong enough to make a treaty ceding territory and long maintain power unless they could receive, at the time of making the treaty, money enough to support the army. Whatever party can keep the army in its support can hold the power. The present Government is without any regular revenue, & without a prompt payment as a part of the consideration would not venture to make a Treaty. . . . Had the appropriation been passed I am confident I should have made an honorable peace by which we should have acquired California, & such other territory as we desired, before the end of October. Should the war be now protracted, the responsibility will fall more heavily upon the head of Senator Davis than upon any other man, and he will deserve the execrations of the country."[2]

[1] Adams's *Memoirs*, XII, 270. [2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 76.

While Polk was thus relieving his feelings by confiding to his diary these unflattering comments on Wilmot, Davis, and the Whigs, Santa Anna was on his way to Mexico. He sailed from Havana on the evening of August 8, having chartered for the purpose the British steam-ship *Arab*, and was accompanied by his faithful Almonte, and by Rejón and Basadre, who had been, respectively, his Ministers of Foreign Relations and War at the time his last administration collapsed.

On the morning of Sunday, the sixteenth of August, the *Arab* was off Vera Cruz, where she appears to have been boarded by a boat from one of the British men-of-war then lying off the harbor. The senior British officer informed Commodore Conner that the vessel carried no cargo and would not be allowed to take any on her return; and she was allowed to enter the port without molestation. Conner wrote that he had thought it best not to board the *Arab* so that it might not appear that Santa Anna had entered with the concurrence of the American squadron.[1]

Santa Anna's first act on landing was to issue a very long address to his countrymen setting forth his present political programme. He had, he said, been summoned by the people and garrisons of the departments of Jalisco, Vera

[1] Conner to Bancroft, Aug. 16, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 776. The above is the official account, but there appears to be some mystery about it. Lieutenant Raphael Semmes, who then commanded the United States brig *Somers*, published a detailed account of the *Arab* being boarded by a boat from the sloop-of-war *St. Mary's* and how the boarding officer was introduced to Santa Anna.—(Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 118.) Santa Anna himself described (for the benefit of his countrymen) how he left Havana at night, intending also to enter Vera Cruz at night, so as to evade the blockading squadron; how his plans were foiled by the incapacity of the drunken master of the *Arab*; how the ship was boarded by an American officer; and how in some way quite inexplicable to him the officer permitted him to proceed. —(*Apología al buen Criterio*, 17.) The strong probability is that the master of the *Arab* never had the slightest intention of trying to run the blockade at night, Vera Cruz, in the absence of buoys and lights, being altogether too dangerous a port even without a hostile squadron, and he had no doubt been assured by Santa Anna that the Americans would let him pass. If Conner's statement is accurate, the master probably took his ship along-side the first British cruiser he met (of which there were two or three then off Vera Cruz), asked if it was all right for him to proceed, and was reassured by the British officer who boarded him.

Cruz, Sinaloa, Southern Mexico, and other parts of the republic, and he had just learned of the overthrow of Paredes and of having been himself named general-in-chief of the liberating army. He denounced in unmeasured terms the intrigues of the monarchists, who (according to him) were responsible for all the difficulties in which Mexico found herself involved, accused Paredes of bringing to the capital troops who should have been in the field opposing Taylor, and declared that Paredes had "prepared and arranged for" the reverses at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

Never, said Santa Anna, had the situation of the republic been so difficult. On the one hand, its national existence was threatened by the United States, and, on the other, the monarchical party was trying to impose European dominion. The union of republicans of the true faith and the concert of the army and the people could alone secure independence and establish peace on the solid basis of public liberty. To this end he proposed that the Constitution of 1824 should be considered in force until the new Constitution, which was to be framed by the Congress just summoned, should be completed.

"The slave of public opinion myself, I shall act in accordance with it; seeking for it henceforth in whatever manner it may be known and expressed, and subjecting myself, afterwards, entirely to the decisions of the constituent assembly, the organ of the sovereign will of the nation."[1]

After attending a banquet given in his honor in Vera Cruz, Santa Anna departed for one of his haciendas, El Encero,[2] and sent Rejón and Almonte to the capital. A cabinet was at once formed, with Rejón in his old post as Minister of Foreign Relations and Almonte as Secretary of War; while the Secretary of the Treasury was Gómez

[1] *Santa Anna's Address*; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 777–785. This, it is said, was written by Rejón.—(Rivera, *Hist. de Jalapa*, III, 782.)

[2] This is the usual spelling, but El Lencero is perhaps more correct.—(Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 223.)

Farias, whose co-operation indicated that the union of the Santanistas with the extreme Radical group, suggested by Santa Anna in the spring, had been successfully accomplished. Salas, the commander-in-chief of the liberating army, continued to act as chief executive; but the real master of the country, whose orders Salas cheerfully obeyed, was the owner of El Encero.

The most urgent thing for the new cabinet to determine was the policy to be pursued in regard to the war, a matter which had doubtless been the subject of much discussion between Santa Anna and his friends before they reached Vera Cruz. It bore two principal aspects: the first, and to their minds probably the less important, being the probability of military success; and the second, the effect which the public knowledge that negotiations for peace were under discussion would have upon domestic policy. Previous Mexican administrations had been encouraged by the confidential reports they received from the United States to believe that no war would be waged by that country against Mexico; and no one had argued more earnestly than the new Secretary of War in favor of a bold policy in relation to the annexation of Texas. Writing from Washington in the spring of 1844, Almonte had assured his government that in the event of Texan annexation it was certain that the New England states, and perhaps New York and Pennsylvania, would secede from the Union, or, if not, would refuse to make war on Mexico.

"I have," he said, "the strongest assurances for this belief and you may rely upon it, since they come from members of Congress and Senators and from influential persons in the said states. This is without counting upon the abolitionists, who are and will be decided partisans of our cause."

As preliminary measures he had urged that commissioners should be sent to Cuba, to Spain, to England, and to France with letters of marque to be issued to privateers upon the outbreak of war; and he had advised his government "to send emissaries to certain people who are near our

frontiers and who, of whatever color they may be, will be of immense utility to us in the event of war." [1]

War had now existed for some months, and whatever hopeful anticipations might have been based upon Almonte's assurances, they had been proved to be utterly unfounded. The American Congress was all but unanimous for war, the people proved to be eager to volunteer, nobody in any part of the world seemed disposed to venture a dollar in privateering, and both negroes and Indians were perfectly peaceful.

As for the American armies, it had long been the accepted Mexican view that they were entirely composed of adventurers without religion and without either instruction or discipline — the implied corollary being, of course, that the Mexican armies enjoyed all these priceless advantages, and that they were therefore certain of an easy triumph in the event of a battle upon anything like equal terms. The result of the first two battles of the war had not been such as to encourage much hope of successful resistance in the field, but Santa Anna and his friends had not yet lost faith in the Mexican army under a new leader.

The internal situation of affairs evidently presented no doubts or difficulties to their minds. Herrera's government had been overthrown because it had ventured to consider discussing terms of peace, and Paredes because he was believed to be plotting for a monarchy. Santa Anna, on his arrival in Mexico, had only to avoid these blunders and put himself forward as an uncompromising advocate of war. Certainly he could not have felt himself strong enough to take any step in the direction of peace — a step which was sure to excite the indignation of the ruling classes in Mexico, and was quite likely to result in his summary overthrow at the hands of eager and expectant rivals.

The army, the church, and the press in Mexico still entertained a strong belief in the prowess of their troops and the weakness of the American army. Moreover, they still clung to the belief that the Americans were fatally divided.

[1] Almonte to Minister of Relations, March 15, 1844; *Sec. Rel. Ext. MSS.*

They had been for so many years entertained by declamation against the designs of the United States, and by published extracts from American newspapers hostile to Texan annexation, that they were unable to perceive how the American people could forget political divisions in the face of a foreign enemy, nor how inevitably the wealth and strength of the American Union must accomplish the overthrow of the Mexican nation, no matter how earnestly its people might be resolved to defend themselves from invasion. "A muddy mixture of pride and ignorance," inherited doubtless from their Spanish and Moorish ancestors, prevented clear and wholesome thinking upon this subject; so that the time had not yet come when a government in Mexico could venture openly to negotiate with the United States.

It was therefore the necessary conclusion of Santa Anna and his advisers that they could not yet listen to overtures for peace, and a reply substantially in this sense was prepared to Buchanan's note of the twenty-seventh of July.[1] That note had contained a phrase to the effect that it was useless, "in the present communication," to discuss the causes of the war. His Excellency the general-in-chief of the liberating army, replied Rejón, could not accept a proposition on the basis of "refusing a discussion upon the causes of the war existing between the two republics," for to do so would be to waive the question of its justice, and thus complete the irritation of public opinion. He added that a congress had been summoned which would meet on the sixth of December; and to Congress the note of Mr. Buchanan would be submitted, "in order that it may determine upon what it shall judge to be proper for the interests of the nation." In the meanwhile the relations of Mexico toward the United States would continue on the same footing as they were when the general-in-chief of the liberating army assumed charge of the executive power of the nation.[2]

[1] See page 230 above.

[2] Rejón to Buchanan, August 31, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 43.

This was obviously tantamount to a refusal to consider the question of peace at all, and it was so regarded at Washington, although, by referring the matter to the Mexican Congress, a door had been left open to possible changes in the political situation. Buchanan, after a long cabinet discussion, wrote to Rejón that he had never proposed to withdraw from discussion "the causes of the war existing between the two republics," and had no disposition to do so; and that the President would wait, "with patience and with hope," for the final decision of the Mexican government.[1]

Polk was not yet fully aware how grossly he had been deceived by the assurances that had reached him of Santa Anna's pacific intentions. That he was to learn later. But already he must have begun to see that Santa Anna had not the smallest intention of making peace, and that so long as the Mexican newspapers continued to clamor for war the voice of the eminent "slave of public opinion" would join in the chorus. Polk had arranged to let Santa Anna pass the blockade because he regarded him as a disturbing element. In truth, Santa Anna, so far from being a disturbing element, was the one man about whom, at that moment, all the factions into which the ruling classes of Mexico were divided could rally for a united prosecution of the war.

[1] Buchanan to Rejón, Sept. 26, 1846; *ibid.*, 44.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### MONTEREY

General Taylor, awaiting reinforcements and supplies at Matamoros, was very soon extremely embarrassed by the excited patriotism which sent him many more men than he could properly use. What he needed, more than men, were supplies and means of transportation.

"The volunteer force ordered to report to me here is much greater than I can possibly employ—at any rate in the first instance; the influx of twelve-months volunteers has even impeded my forward movement by engrossing all the resources of the quartermaster's department to land them and transport them to healthy positions."[1]

His first embarrassment had come through the foolish activities of General Gaines, who still commanded the western division, with head-quarters at New Orleans, and who was again, as in 1836, busy issuing calls for volunteers, without authority and upon the strength of newspaper reports. Already in the summer of 1845 he had credited an absurd newspaper rumor to the effect that Taylor was likely to be attacked at Corpus Christi; and without a shadow of legal authority he had called upon the governor of Louisiana for two regiments of infantry and two companies of artillery as reinforcements. The governor, without stopping to inquire what right Gaines had to call for volunteers, furnished the troops. The two infantry regiments did not start, as the War Department interfered in time; but the two artillery companies were actually sent to Taylor and were kept in his camp at Corpus Christi for several weeks. But

[1] Taylor to Polk, Aug. 1, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 337.

Gaines, though sharply reprimanded by the Secretary of War, was incapable of learning wisdom.[1]

The news of the capture of Captain Thornton's detachment of dragoons reached New Orleans on the second of May, 1846. Gaines, of course, jumped to the conclusion that Taylor was in desperate straits, and at once began issuing orders right and left to all sorts of persons—governors of states and others—requesting them to raise perfectly indefinite numbers of troops and despatch them to Texas. So far as the War Department could ascertain, the volunteer force thus called for might exceed twelve thousand men.[2]

Gaines's high rank in the army naturally gave weight to his requisitions, and the persons who received them apparently assumed that he was acting under orders from the United States government. The government, however, after its previous experience with Gaines, had very carefully abstained from authorizing him to call for troops, and for the third time, as in 1836 and 1845, found itself much embarrassed by the situation which he had created. The difficulty was solved by notifying the governors of Kentucky and Tennessee that they were not to comply with Gaines's calls, while at the same time the governors of Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri were notified that his calls would be recognized, but only to the extent to which they had already been complied with.[3]

Gaines was also relieved from command and ordered to Washington. A court of inquiry upon his conduct found that General Gaines was guilty of violating orders and acting illegally in several instances; but the court recommended that in consideration of his long service, and the patriotism and purity of his motives, no further proceedings should be had in his case.

[1] See Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 35–48. General Scott at that time indorsed upon one of Gaines's reports the cheerful comment that it was charitable to suppose his irregularities arose mainly from insanity or dotage. —(*Ibid.*, 47.)

[2] Memorandum of the militia or volunteer force recently called, etc.; *ibid.*, 19.

[3] *Ibid.*, 58.

"General Gaines," the President wrote, "is now a very old man & although guilty of acts which cannot be justified, and for the commission of which, if brought before a general Court Martial he would without doubt be punished, yet I determined in lenity to him to yield to the recommendation of the Court of Enquiry. . . . I directed further that he be ordered to the North and stationed there, so as to put it out of his power further to embarrass the Government during the pendency of the Mexican War." [1]

General Taylor had also called for volunteer reinforcements immediately after the capture of Thornton and his men; but, unlike Gaines, Taylor had acted in precise accordance with orders. He had been authorized by the War Department, in case Mexico should declare war "or commence hostilities by crossing the Rio Grande with a considerable force," to call on the governors of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas for volunteers. When Taylor asked for aid, therefore, he called for eight regiments—or five thousand men in all—of which four regiments (two mounted and two of infantry) were called from Texas and four regiments of infantry from Louisiana.[2]

A serious legal difficulty soon developed in respect to the volunteers furnished in response to the calls issued by Gaines and Taylor. It was supposed at first that these men were enlisted for six months; but the matter being referred to Washington, it was decided that under the statute of 1795 then in force they could only be retained in service for three months, unless they decided voluntarily to re-enlist.[3] The men who were subsequently enlisted under the act of May 13, 1846, were of course enlisted for twelve months or during the war.

The Louisiana three months' volunteers were the first to arrive at the front, one regiment, accompanied by General Persifor F. Smith, of the Louisiana militia, reaching Matamoros on May 24, and another soon after. With them

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 83.

[2] Marcy to Taylor, Aug. 23, 1845; Jan. 13, 1846; Taylor to Adjutant-General, April 26, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 85, 90, 140.

[3] Marcy to Taylor, Aug. 3, 1846; *ibid.*, 316.

came a company from Mobile.[1] The Louisiana three months' men, as they arrived, were formed into a brigade under General Smith, and were encamped opposite Matamoros; and there they remained until early in August, when they were sent back to New Orleans to be mustered out of the service. General Smith, however, desired to remain. Taylor therefore asked permission to retain him and give him a command; and, although not a soldier by profession, he proved a useful officer.[2]

Of the Texas three months' men only a part were actually raised. Taylor had asked for two regiments of infantry, but only one was sent to the front, under the command of Albert Sidney Johnston, a native of Kentucky and a graduate of West Point. He had resigned from the United States army in 1834. In 1837 he went to Texas, joined the Texan army, became Secretary of War under Lamar, was engaged for some time in fighting Indians, and finally retired from public life owing to controversies with Houston. With the exception of a single company, Johnston's regiment declined to re-enlist at the close of their three months, and were sent home without having seen any active service. Johnston was much disappointed, and Taylor, who had known him in the army in previous years, made him inspector-general of volunteers.

The two Texan regiments of mounted volunteers were raised, one in the eastern and one in the western part of the state. Some independent companies of Texan rangers which had been attached to Taylor's army while he was at Corpus Christi, and had rendered useful service near Matamoros, were incorporated with the western Texas regiment under Colonel John C. Hays, who had a great reputation as a successful Indian fighter. The eastern regiment was under command of Colonel George T. Wood. Both regiments, with substantial unanimity, re-enlisted at the close of their first three months' service, General Taylor being

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, May 24, 1846; *Ibid.*, 301.

[2] *Ibid.*, 317–320. He was later appointed colonel of the regiment of mounted rifles, authorised by the act of May 19, 1846.

specially anxious to retain them, as he felt that without them he would be much too weak in cavalry when he first took the field.[1]

Early in June, 1846, the twelve months' volunteers began arriving at Santiago Island, and from then until the end of July, or later, they kept coming in constantly increasing numbers. With the exception of two regiments, one from Georgia and one from Alabama, and a battalion raised in and near Baltimore, the troops were all from the Mississippi valley—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Grim-visaged war presented itself to these citizen soldiers and their inexperienced officers under its least heroic aspect. The ships which brought them, some of them sailing vessels, were greatly overcrowded, and there was indescribable suffering from heat and sea-sickness. When, after periods varying from three to seventeen days at sea, they reached their destination, only one hundred and seventy-five miles north of the tropic, they saw nothing but a barren waste of dazzling white sand, without a single blade of vegetation to relieve the eye. Upon these burning sands the troops were landed, and were generally kept waiting through long summer days before it was possible to send river steam-boats around to the Brazos de Santiago to transport their stores and property to the mouth of the Rio Grande River. When the quartermaster of the army, after greater or less delays, was able to supply transportation, the men were marched along the beach, waded the shallow Boca Chica, marched to the river, and thence up to various places scattered along from a point opposite Burrita to a point opposite Matamoros, where they were permanently encamped.

The march from the mouth of the river was through a primitive wilderness, strange and picturesque to Northern eyes. The cactus and the Spanish bayonet dotted the open spaces; wild cattle and horses were seen running over the marshy prairie; the numerous lagoons and ponds swarmed with wild geese and ducks and the red-winged flamingo;

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Aug. 31, 1846; *Ibid.*, 322.

and the dense chaparral everywhere closed the background.

The rainy season had only just begun, and the sufferings of the troops from heat and unaccustomed marching were greatly increased by almost incessant wet weather. "Our camp," wrote one soldier, "which was near the river bank, was soon ankle-deep in mud; the heavy rain continued to fall incessantly; we were unable to cook our food or to sleep with any degree of comfort, for our clothes and blankets were thoroughly saturated with water night and day."[1] The rain, however, afforded one advantage, as the river had risen to an immense height, and it was reported by the inhabitants that for many years such a freshet had not been known. As a result, the usually shallow stream was rendered more navigable, though the current was extremely swift and the river steam-boats found difficulty in ascending the river. An advance by land was almost impracticable.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the volunteers suffered severely from sickness, which was particularly marked in the case of the men who had been suddenly transported from north of the Ohio River to a low latitude in the middle of summer. The volunteer surgeons were not always men of education or experience, and the surgeons of the regular army were reported by Taylor to be "too few even for their appropriate duties."[2]

Taylor was thus obviously disabled for some time from making any extensive forward movement. But early in June he wrote that he proposed to send a battalion of infantry up the river and eventually to establish a large depot at Camargo. Toward the end of June the seventh regiment of regulars and a portion of the Texas cavalry were therefore advanced, first as far as Reynosa, and then to Camargo, where they arrived on the fourteenth of July.

[1] Reid, *Scouting Expeditions of the Texas Rangers*, 55.

[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Sept. 3, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 417–419. The surgeon-general of the army, however, under date of July 29, 1846, reported that the regular troops employed against Mexico had comparatively as large a number of medical officers as any other army in the world. —(*Ibid.*, 415.)

By the end of the month the whole of the regular force had either reached Camargo or was in motion thither.

"We have now," Taylor wrote on July 22, "several steamboats in the river and the business of sending up troops and supplies is urged as much as possible. I find the difficulty of throwing supplies up the river to be very great, in consequence of the rapidity of the current, and the entire absence of dry steamboat fuel. But every effort will be employed to overcome these difficulties, and I have no doubt that we shall be able to keep up a depot at Camargo quite sufficient for any operations from that point. As yet the land route to Camargo is impassable for wagons owing to the recent rains and freshets. As soon as it shall become practicable, the field artillery and train of the army will move forward to Camargo. As soon as I can complete the necessary arrangements for throwing forward the volunteer troops to Camargo I propose to establish my headquarters at that point, and organize, without delay, a marching column to move to Monterey."[1]

Accordingly, on July 30, Taylor issued orders for the movement of such of the volunteers as were destined to join in the advance, consisting of two Kentucky regiments, two Ohio regiments, two Tennessee regiments, the Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia regiments, and the Baltimore battalion. The rest of the volunteers were to remain near Matamoros. The heavy baggage, with four companies of each regiment and two companies of the Baltimore battalion, were to be sent forward by water. The remaining companies of each corps marched by land as soon as provided with wagons by the quartermaster's department, as did also the dragoons and horse artillery.[2]

The frail and filthy little steam-boats provided for transportation required nearly a week to struggle up to Camargo against the rushing waters of the winding river, owing partly to lack of fuel, partly to high water, and partly to the ignorance of the stream on the part of the pilots.

"At that period," as one of the Ohio volunteers recorded, "but few wood yards had been established, and we were sometimes compelled to take the troops ashore to gather the pickets enclosing the fields to

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, July 22, 1846; *ibid.*, 399.
[2] General Orders No. 93; *ibid.*, 496.

be used as fuel. Occasionally, too, we were detained at places where the river, in its whole length brimful, had overrun its banks and covered the country for miles, forming wide lagoons in which our pilots had to sound for the channel." [1]

The march by land was as tedious and much more toilsome. Near the river the men were forced to wade through mud and water, nearly waist deep, in a burning sun. Back from the river there were rocky and desert stretches, where no water was to be found, and the troops suffered desperately from thirst. But at last, by the end of August, Taylor had assembled a force he considered adequate at Camargo and was ready to begin his advance. At Camargo, however, as at the camps lower down the river, there was much sickness: measles, dysentery, and fever, presumably typhoid.

"The mortality in our camp at Camargo," the same Ohio volunteer wrote, "was appalling. The dead march was ever wailing in our ears, and even at this distant period, I can scarcely look back to our brief stay there without a shudder. . . . Large hospital tents were constantly full—the dead being removed at sunrise and sunset but to make room for the dying. The groans and lamentations of the poor sufferers during those sickly sultry nights were heart-rending." [2]

The regular troops, who were better acclimated and better campaigners than the volunteers, suffered less, and the movement from Camargo was begun by a portion of the regulars under General Worth, who marched up to Mier about the nineteenth of August and thence to Cerralvo, a town about half-way between Camargo and Monterey. They were gradually followed by the remainder of the army, until by the first week in September all of those who were destined to take part in the advance were upon the road.

Four months had thus very nearly elapsed from the time of the battle of Resaca de la Palma, during which Taylor had been endeavoring to collect an effective force of only six thousand men, and to transport them to a point from which

[1] Giddings, *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 49.
[2] *Ibid.*, 83.

they might begin operations against the Mexican troops. These delays had thoroughly justified Scott's anticipations that there would be no need for his own presence at the front before the first of September. His proposal in the month of May had been that the volunteers should be mustered into service and armed as promptly as practicable, and then held in camps of instruction in their own localities in readiness to move to the Rio Grande early in the autumn.[1] The President and his cabinet, however, as well as the newspapers of the United States, had manifested the greatest impatience at this delay, a striking example of the pathetic ignorance concerning the essential conditions of warfare which a peaceful nation is always certain to exhibit.[2]

Taylor's movements were doubtless hastened by his knowledge of this criticism. In a way he was unprepared. He had no accurate information in regard to the number of the Mexican troops in his front, or indeed whether there was any substantial garrison at Monterey or any likelihood of its being defended. No effort had as yet been made to impede his march or to interfere with the passage of the boats up and down the Rio Grande; and this failure of the most obvious means of defence naturally suggested that perhaps Monterey might be abandoned by the Mexicans.[3] These anticipations were soon dissipated.

On the third of September Worth wrote from Cerralvo, reporting the fall of the Paredes government and the arrival of Santa Anna at the city of Mexico. He also reported that two thousand troops of the line had arrived at Monterey at the end of August with four pieces of field artillery, that ten guns had previously been placed in position, and that while there was no cavalry at Monterey it was supposed to be at Cadereyta and Marin. Lieutenant George G. Meade,

[1] Scott to Marcy, May 25, 1846; Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 11.

[2] This aspect of the case is well explained in Meade, I, 110.

[3] On August 14 Taylor wrote to General Wool that he "anticipated no serious difficulty in reaching and occupying Saltillo by October 1." See H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 411. On August 23, writing to his son-in-law, he said: "I fear the enemy will not fight us at Monterey, or in force anywhere else unless we penetrate far beyond there or Saltillo."—(Taylor to Wood, Aug. 23, 1846; *Taylor's Letters from the Battlefields*, 45–50.)

his principal engineer officer, was trying to get an accurate plan of the city showing the approaches and projected points of resistance. The weather for several days had been "very unpropitious" and, he feared, would impede the trains; but a few days of fair weather would restore the roads to good condition.[1]

Worth's information as to reinforcements was fairly correct. Paredes, as has already been stated, had felt able to spare three thousand men from the city of Mexico, the last of which left the capital on the twenty-seventh of July in very wet weather. This brigade, under General Simeon Ramírez, reached Celaya on August 6, where they were overtaken by the news of the pronunciamiento of Salas, and they were ordered by the central government to halt and await further orders. A meeting of officers was held to decide what to do. Half of them were in favor of joining Salas and half in favor of standing by Paredes; but on the ninth they received news of the fall of Paredes, and under orders from the new government they continued on their march.[2]

The whole strength of these reinforcements when they left the capital was, as nearly as could be ascertained, three thousand one hundred and forty men, with thirteen field-pieces and three seven-inch mortars. They marched in three detachments at some distance apart, the last of which entered Monterey on the ninth of September, nearly a week after Worth had sent his budget of news from Cerralvo. Allowing for casualties on the march, the reinforcements numbered probably three thousand men when they reached Monterey. They were made up of three battalions of infantry of the line, two infantry battalions of permanent militia (Aguascalientes and Querétaro), two squadrons of regular cavalry, two squadrons of the lancers of Jalisco, and two of the Guanajuato regiment of cavalry. The total force then in Monterey, including these reinforcements,

[1] Worth to Bliss, Sept. 3, 1846; *ibid.*, 419.

[2] Balbontin, 16. The author gives a vivid and very informing account of the officers' discussion.

consisted of about four thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry, with forty-six pieces of field artillery, many of which were in bad condition. There were also, it would appear, some guns of position of moderate calibre. About a thousand men of the garrison were local militia, most of them mounted rancheros.[1]

Taylor's army, as finally organized for the advance on Monterey, consisted of four divisions, two composed mainly of regulars and two entirely of volunteers. The first division was made up of the second dragoons, the first, third, and fourth regular infantry, Captain Shiver's company of Texas three months' volunteers who had re-enlisted, Ridgely's and Bragg's batteries of artillery, and the Baltimore volunteer battalion. It was under the command of Brigadier-General David E. Twiggs, a native of Georgia. He had received his first commission as captain in the regular army just before the opening of the War of 1812, in which he played a modest part; and had served under General Jackson in his march toward St. Augustine in 1817, and in both the Black Hawk war and the Seminole war, in Florida. He was otherwise without distinction.

The second division consisted of a battalion of regular artillery serving as infantry, the fifth, seventh, and eighth regular infantry, Blanchard's company of re-enlisted Louisiana three months' volunteers, and Duncan's and Taylor's batteries of artillery. It was commanded by Brigadier-General William J. Worth, a native of New York, who had served in the War of 1812 as aid first to General Morgan Lewis and then to General Scott. He was made a captain near the close of that war as a reward for meritorious services on the Niagara frontier. After the war he was

[1] Balbontin, 27. The above estimate may very likely be too low. Arista, when he retreated from Matamoros, had 2,638 men left by the time he reached Linares.—(*México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 566.) There were probably some troops in or near Monterey at that time. Adding the three thousand reinforcements from the city of Mexico and the thousand rancheros, the total force must have amounted to as much as seven thousand men. In October, after sustaining losses by battle and desertion, Ampudia still had nearly six thousand men left; but he may have received some small accessions of force.

for several years stationed at West Point as instructor of tactics, and had subsequently commanded at the Watervliet arsenal. He had distinguished himself by some exceptional successes in the Seminole war. His reputation in the army was that of a brave and gallant soldier, but impetuous, irritable, wanting in self-control, and of poor judgment.

While the army was first encamped opposite Matamoros in April a dispute arose between Twiggs and Worth, the former being the senior in lineal rank and the latter holding a higher brevet title. Worth declined to serve under Twiggs, went to Washington, and offered his resignation. Hardly had he done so, when the news arrived of the capture of Thornton and his dragoons, and Worth at once asked and obtained permission to withdraw his resignation and to rejoin Taylor's army. He of course missed the battles of May 8 and 9, but was in time to assist in organising the army, and took the lead in the march toward Monterey, as he took the lead in almost every future operation during the war.

The division of volunteers under Major-General William O. Butler was divided into two brigades—the first, under Brigadier-General Hamer, consisting of the first Kentucky and the first Ohio regiments; the second, under Brigadier-General Quitman, consisting of the first Tennessee and the Mississippi rifle regiment.

General Butler's only military experience was as a volunteer in the War of 1812, when he was taken prisoner in the inglorious campaign which terminated at the River Raisin. He was, however, exchanged in time to fight under Jackson at the battle of New Orleans. For more than thirty years after that time he practised law and Democratic politics in the state of Ohio, and his appointment to the army in 1846 was a reward for political services.

William L. Hamer was a Democratic member of Congress, whose abilities were highly thought of by his friends and neighbors, but who had never made any conspicuous mark in public life. The most notable act of his career was

his nomination of Ulysses S. Grant as a cadet at West Point.[1]

John A. Quitman has already figured in this history as a leader of the Mississippi volunteers who went to Texas in 1836, just too late to take part in the battle of San Jacinto. Since that time he had been practising law near Natchez, had served as brigadier-general of Mississippi militia, and had been an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate in 1845. Apart from his march to Texas in 1836 he had had no experience in the practice of the art of war.

The Texas division, under Major-General J. Pinckney Henderson, the governor of the state, consisted of the two regiments of Texas mounted volunteers, or so many of them as had re-enlisted.

The numbers of the regulars and volunteers amounted to a little over three thousand men each, or about six thousand men in all.[2]

Taylor, having thus arranged for the advance from Camargo, started for the front and reached Cerralvo on September 9. By the twelfth of that month the regular troops were concentrated there with one brigade of the volunteer division, the remainder of the infantry were on the march, and the Texan mounted troops were following a road by China and Cadereyta, and were to rejoin the army at Marin. Taylor reported to Washington that the enemy was said to be in considerable force at Monterey and might give battle there, and that Santa Anna himself was said to be on his way from the interior and was expected in a few days. "The health of the army," Taylor added, "is much improved since approaching the mountains, and it is generally in excellent condition for service."[3]

By September 17 the army was at Marin, twenty-four miles from Monterey, where it was joined by the Texan mounted troops. The advance had been constantly in sight

[1] Hamer died of disease in the following December.

[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Sept. 8, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 417.

[3] Same to same, Sept. 12, 1846; *ibid.*, 421.

of Torrejon's cavalry, who, however, made no attempt to cut off communications and retired, except at Ramos, where "a trifling affair took place between McCulloch's rangers and the enemy's rear guard." Vague reports of Santa Anna's advance with reinforcements were still received from time to time; but Taylor even yet thought it doubtful whether Ampudia would attempt to hold Monterey. He believed that the regular Mexican force was small—about three thousand men, eked out perhaps to six thousand by volunteers, "many of them *forced*." "I am gratified to state that our own force," he continued, "is in excellent condition fully prepared for the most active and arduous service." [1]

On the eighteenth of September the entire army marched from Marin, and on the next morning encamped before Monterey in a place known by the Mexicans as the wood of Santo Domingo, but called by the American soldiers the Walnut Springs. This camp was three miles northeasterly from Monterey, and was the nearest suitable position. By the time the camp was established it had been discovered that the enemy occupied the town in force, and had added greatly to its strength by fortifying the approaches and the commanding heights; and it had thus become evident that a vigorous resistance was to be expected.[2]

The city of Monterey lies fifteen hundred feet above the sea on the northerly bank of the Santa Catarina, or Little San Juan River, an erratic mountain stream capable of sudden freshets, rising west of the city, and emptying ultimately into the San Juan, which comes into the Rio Grande at Camargo. The site of the city is upon a plain open to the north, the other three sides being surrounded by mountains which rise abruptly and attain a considerable height.

Looking from the camp of the American troops to the left, or southeast, the most striking feature of the landscape is the picturesque peak known as the Silla—the Mexican saddle—which rises high above the other mountains of the

[1] Same to same, Sept. 17, 1846; *ibid.*, 422.

[2] An interesting account of the march from Camargo to Monterey will be found in Meade, I, 124–131.

Sierra. All along the southern horizon the lower mountains show their outlines—volcanic, contorted, and fantastically weathered by violent showers in a climate where no frost ever penetrates the ground. Over the town itself—flat-roofed and Oriental in aspect—towers the ancient Cathedral. Farther away, and to the west of the city, rises to the height of six or seven hundred feet above the plain an isolated and rather conspicuous hill, then known as the Loma de Independencia, upon the eastern slope of which stands the abandoned Bishop's Palace, a solid and ornate stone building surmounted by a dome, and looking more like a great church than a residence.[1]

In 1846 Monterey contained a population of ten or twelve thousand inhabitants. Like most Mexican towns, it was regularly laid out, with rather narrow, straight streets, generally running toward the cardinal points of the compass. The life of the city centred in its southeastern quarter not far from the river, about the great plaza, on the easterly side of which stood the Cathedral and on the westerly side the Palacio Municipal. Immediately on the farther, or western, side of the Palacio Municipal was another smaller plaza, from the north and south sides of which two streets proceeded westerly, uniting shortly beyond. Thence the street ran still westerly to a large open space, the centre of which was at that time occupied by a cemetery surrounded by stout stone-walls. West of the cemetery the street diverged toward the river, and, passing between the site of the Bishop's Palace and the river, became the high-road to Saltillo.

Hasty efforts to fortify the approaches to the town had been begun almost immediately after the retreat of the Mexican troops from Matamoros, and by the middle of September a number of guns were in position, affording formidable obstacles to an attacking force. Directly north of the town, upon the open plain, was the citadel, to which

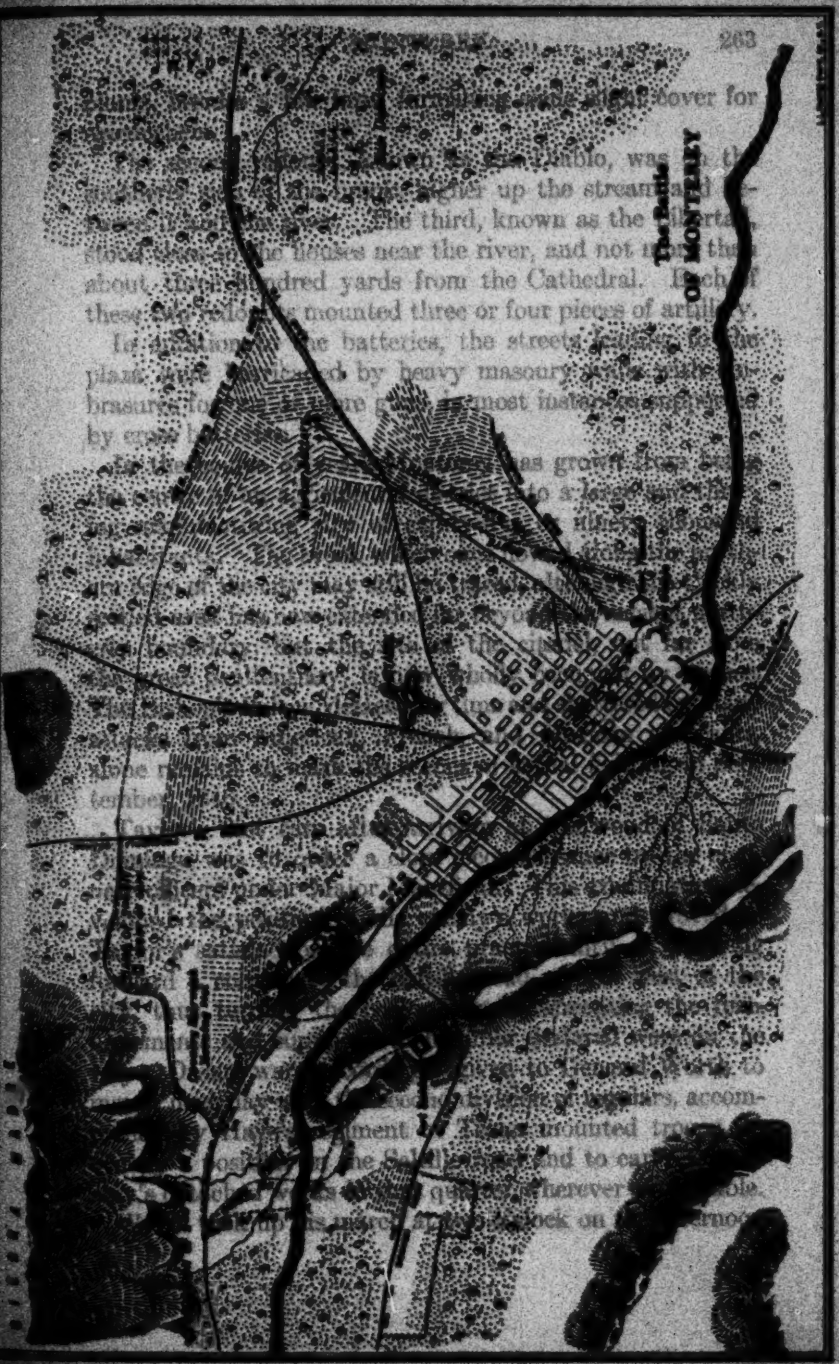
[1] This structure was erected in 1785 by a certain Bishop Verger, but abandoned after his death, in 1790. It is said to have had a fine garden about it, and the cost of maintenance of such an establishment on that stony hill must have been enormous.

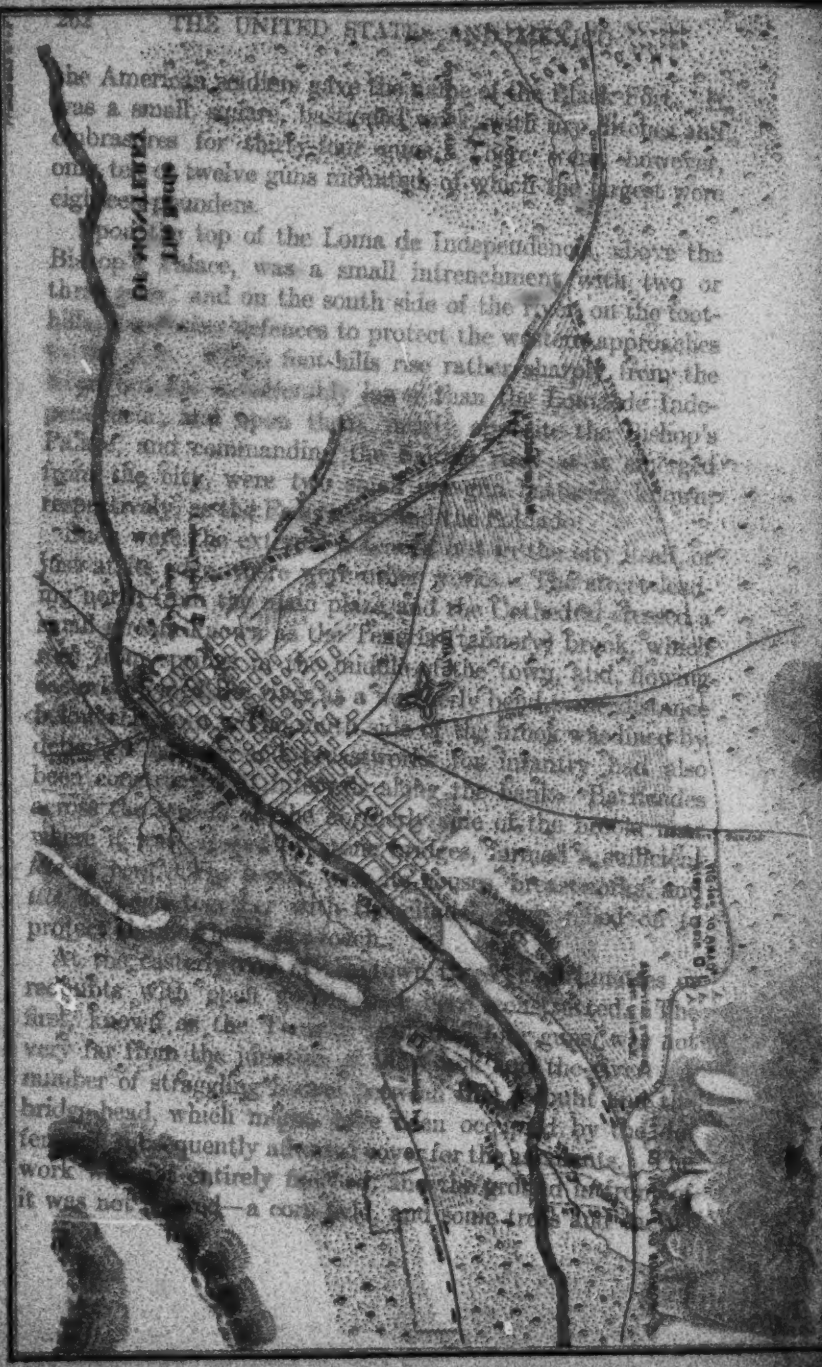
the American soldiers gave the name of the Black Fort. It was a small, square, bastioned work, with dry ditches and embrasures for thirty-four guns. There were, however, only ten or twelve guns mounted, of which the largest were eighteen-pounders.

Upon the top of the Loma de Independencia, above the Bishop's Palace, was a small intrenchment with two or three guns; and on the south side of the river, on the foot-hills, were other defences to protect the western approaches to the city. These foot-hills rise rather sharply from the river, but are considerably lower than the Loma de Independencia; and upon them, nearly opposite the Bishop's Palace, and commanding the Saltillo road as it emerged from the city, were two small one-gun batteries, known, respectively, as the Federación and the Soldado.

Such were the external defences, but in the city itself, or just at its edge, there were other works. The street leading north from the main plaza and the Cathedral crossed a small stream known as the Tenería (tannery) brook, which rose from springs in the middle of the town, and, flowing easterly, joined the river at a northerly bend some distance below the town. The south side of the brook was lined by detached houses, and breastworks for infantry had also been constructed at intervals along the bank. Barricades across the streets on the northerly side of the brook, near where it was crossed by stone bridges, formed a sufficient *tête de pont*. The brook, with its houses, breastworks, and *tête de pont*, together with the citadel, were relied on to protect the northerly approach.

At the easterly end of the town three small lunettes or redoubts with open gorges had been constructed. The first, known as the Tenería, mounting four guns, was not very far from the junction of the brook and the river. A number of straggling houses between this redoubt and the bridge-head, which might have been occupied by the defenders, subsequently afforded cover for the assailants. The work was not entirely finished, and the ground in front of it was not cleared—a corn-field, and some trees and cactus


Palace
of Monterey



plants, besides a few huts, furnishing some slight cover for skirmishers.

The second redoubt, known as the Diablo, was on the southerly side of the brook, higher up the stream and between it and the river. The third, known as the Libertad, stood close to the houses near the river, and not more than about three hundred yards from the Cathedral. Each of these two redoubts mounted three or four pieces of artillery.

In addition to the batteries, the streets leading to the plaza were barricaded by heavy masonry walls with embrasures for one or more guns, in most instances supported by cross batteries.

In the course of years Monterey has grown from being the centre of an agricultural district into a large and thriving manufacturing city of eighty-five or ninety thousand inhabitants. The brook which once flowed along the northern edge of the city may still be traced, although the thickly settled area has now extended far beyond the ancient northerly boundary, but the site of the citadel, not far from the great penitentiary, is now wholly occupied by houses. The Bishop's Palace, defaced by time and shattered by many attacks from American, French, and Mexican assailants, alone remains to mark the scenes of actual fighting in September, 1846.

Taylor's first care after arriving at the wood of Santo Domingo was to order a close reconnoissance by the engineer officers under Major Mansfield. This examination developed the position of the enemy's works and proved to Taylor's satisfaction the entire practicability of throwing forward a column to the Saltillo road, to the west of the city, thus turning the position and intercepting the reinforcements and supplies which rumor declared were on the way. Orders were accordingly given to General Worth to march next day with the second division of regulars, accompanied by Hays's regiment of Texan mounted troops, to occupy a position on the Saltillo road and to carry the enemy's detached works in that quarter wherever practicable.

Worth took up his march at two o'clock on the afternoon

of Sunday, the twentieth of September, but was greatly delayed because of the necessity of making the route practicable for artillery. By six o'clock in the evening he had advanced only six miles, and he halted for the night north of and just out of range of the battery at the summit of the Independencia hill. Detachments of the Texan cavalry were then sent forward to reconnoitre the position as far as the Saltillo road.

"This examination," said Worth in his report, "resulted in the conviction that the ground in our front and on our left, in advance, constituted at the same time the weak and the strong points of the enemy's position and entered mainly into the defences of the city—the weak point, because commanding the only lines of retreat and of supply in the direction of Saltillo, and controlling that in the direction of Pesqueria Grande; the strong point, because of the peculiarly defensive character of the hills and gorges, and of the very careful and skilful manner with which they had been fortified and guarded."

On the next morning, Monday, the twenty-first, the division was put in motion, and at six o'clock the advance—consisting of Hays's Texans, supported by a part of the infantry and closely followed by a battery of light artillery—on turning an angle of the mountain came upon a strong force of cavalry and infantry, mostly the former. The Mexicans charged, but the American force held its ground, and the combat lasted only fifteen minutes. The Mexicans then retired in disorder upon the Saltillo road, being closely pursued by Worth until he got possession of the gorge where all the roads from Monterey to Saltillo united. At this point the division was halted; but it was soon discovered that the troops were within effective range of the Mexican batteries, and they were moved half a mile further west on the Saltillo road.

Worth by this time was convinced that any effective operations against the city were impracticable unless he was possessed of the exterior batteries, and moreover that the occupation of the heights was indispensable to the restoration of his line of communication with head-quarters. Accordingly, at noon of the twenty-first, a force consisting

of four companies of the artillery battalion and six companies of Texans—in all about three hundred effectives—was detached to storm the batteries on the crest of the hills on the south side of the river. The river, though rapid, was only about waist-deep, and the Americans easily waded it, under a noisy but ineffectual fire.

As they approached the base of the hills Worth could see numerous light Mexican troops descending the slope and arranging themselves at favorable points. Perceiving these indications of determined resistance, the seventh infantry was sent to support the first detachment. "In a short time," says Worth, "the fire became general, the enemy gradually yielding and retiring up the rugged declivity and our men steadily pursuing." Further support appearing necessary, the fifth regiment and Blanchard's company of Louisiana volunteers were detached, accompanied by General P. F. Smith, who was instructed to take command.

The moment the American troops gained the summit, which they did with little or no loss, the Mexicans fled, and, having thus carried the first point of attack, Smith promptly turned the captured gun upon the second and advanced to participate in the assault of the further battery. Before he could reach it, it had been carried with similar ease by the Texans, and the guns of both batteries were immediately brought to bear upon the Bishop's Palace, six hundred yards away. By this time night was closing in and a violent storm ensued. Operations for the day then ceased.

At three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, the twenty-second, a storming party was formed to attack the Bishop's Palace. Six companies of regulars with two hundred Texan riflemen constituted the party. They scrambled up the steep western face of the hill without being discovered until dawn of day, when they had reached a point within about one hundred yards of the crest of the hill, in which position a body of the enemy had been stationed the previous evening, in apparent anticipation of attack. The Mexican picket gave the alarm and fell back, but their fire was

ineffectual and was not returned until the American troops had reached within a few yards of the summit, "when a well-directed and destructive fire, followed by the bayonet of the regulars and rush of the Texans, placed us in possession of the work," which was the small battery placed on the top of the hill, from which, however, the cannon had been previously withdrawn.

There still remained to be taken the Bishop's Palace, a strong building upon which no impression could be made without artillery. Accordingly a twelve-pound howitzer was painfully dragged up the hill, about seven hundred feet high, and opened fire upon the Palace at a distance of four hundred yards. Meanwhile most of the American troops who had taken the heights on the south side of the river were brought over to take part in the coming operations.

By this time Ampudia thought it necessary to reinforce the men in the Palace, who were becoming restive under the artillery fire. A heavy sortie from the Palace, sustained by a strong corps of cavalry, was then made. The American troops had been drawn up in anticipation of such an attack; "the enemy advanced boldly; was repulsed by one general discharge from all arms; fled in confusion, closely pressed by Childs and Hays, preceded by the light troops under Vinton; and, while they fled past, our troops entered the palace and fort." The captured guns, four in number, together with the two American field-batteries which now came up at a gallop, fired on the retreating and confused masses of Mexicans that filled the street leading to the nearest plaza, inflicting heavy loss.

Worth, therefore, by Tuesday afternoon had accomplished the object of investing the city on the western side. With the exception of the force necessary to hold the summit of the hills and serve the guns, the division was concentrated around the Palace, and preparation was made to assault the city on the following day.

About ten o'clock in the morning of Wednesday a heavy fire was heard on the opposite side of the city, which led Worth to the conclusion that General Taylor was conduct-

ing an attack at that end, although no information from Taylor had as yet reached Worth's division. Under these convictions, Worth's troops were ordered to begin the operation which he had first designed to execute in part at night. Two columns of attack were organized to move along the two principal streets leading easterly from the Bishop's Palace toward the Cathedral, with instructions to press forward to the first plaza (the cemetery) and get hold of the ends of streets beyond, and then to enter the buildings, break through the walls, and work from house to house and ascend the roofs. The light artillery was to follow at intervals, covered by reserves to guard the pieces and to afford protection against probable enterprises of cavalry from the left. This was done by seizing and commanding the head of every cross-street.

As Worth's division advanced in the afternoon toward the centre of the city they found the streets strongly barricaded.

"These arrangements of defence," he reported, "gave to our operations at this moment a complicated character, demanding much care and precaution; but the work went on steadily, simultaneously and successfully. About the time our assault commenced the fire ceased from our force in the opposite quarter. Disengaged on the one side, the enemy was enabled to shift men and guns to our quarter, as was soon manifested by an accumulation of fire. At dark we had worked through the walls and floors and reached to within one block of the great plaza, leaving a covered way in our rear; carried a large building which towered over the principal defences, and during the night and ensuing morning crowned the roof with two howitzers and a 6-pounder. All things were now prepared to renew the assault at dawn of day when a flag was sent in asking a momentary suspension of fire." [1]

While Worth was thus successfully carrying the various points of defence on the westerly side of the city, the American troops were meeting with a very much more severe resistance, and suffering a far greater loss at the easterly end. Worth had begun his march at two o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, and it was soon perceived from the American head-quarters that reinforcements were being sent toward

[1] Worth's Report, Sept. 28, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 102–108. See also Reid, 149–168, 181–194; Meade, I, 132–137.

the Bishop's Palace. Taylor accordingly made some hostile demonstrations in front of the town until dark that evening, and at the same time made arrangements to place in battery during the night two twenty-four-pound howitzers and a ten-inch mortar, with a view to opening fire on the following day.

Early in the morning of Monday, the twenty-first, a note from General Worth, written the night before, suggested a strong diversion against the eastern end of the town in order to favor his enterprise against the heights on the west. This was exactly in accord with what Taylor had intended, and therefore, leaving a camp-guard of one company from each regiment, the whole of the infantry and artillery of the first division of regulars and the first division of volunteers were sent in the direction of the city, while all of the cavalry (May's dragoons and Wood's regiment of Texans) were directed to the right to support General Worth, if necessary, and to make an impression, if practicable, upon the upper part of the city.

Taylor's first attack was directed upon the Tenería redoubt and the northerly side of the town east of the bridge. It was made by the regulars of Twiggs's division, except the fourth infantry, who were held in support of the battery that was trying (with inadequate weapons) to shell the citadel. The attacking columns entered the first straggling houses and the grove of trees near them under a heavy fire of artillery from the citadel and the redoubt, and of musketry from the earthworks and from the houses on the southerly side of the brook. An assault on the Tenería redoubt was also attempted.

"The combat," wrote one of the Mexican defenders of the redoubt, "began to be terrible. The Americans kneeling, concealing themselves, in every sort of posture; in possession of the ground close to the fort, within pistol shot, and even on the counter-scarp, and covering themselves with anything they found; maintained a lively fire upon our parapets. Others, who had penetrated the grove, fired through the gorge into the interior of the fort and wounded some men from the rear."[1]

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 30.

The men who thus fired into the rear of the Tenería redoubt were a small party under Captain Backus, of the first regular infantry, with a portion of his own and other companies who had gained the yard of the tannery from which the brook took its name, and whence they poured a destructive fire into the work and into one of the tannery buildings in the rear of the redoubt, which was occupied by Mexican troops.

But the American troops, in their advance on the strong northeasterly angle of the town, had sustained so heavy a loss, particularly in officers, that it was thought best to withdraw them, which was done in good order, leaving Backus and his men, however, isolated in their tannery. As the assailants fell back amid loud shouts from the Mexicans, a cavalry force that had been sheltered by the citadel attempted a charge upon the retreating regulars and the body of volunteers that was now advancing; but it was not pushed with the slightest resolution, and inflicted little damage on the American troops. The only force that came in contact with the Americans was a body of about fifty lancers who were quickly repelled.

As the Mexican cavalry fell back, Quitman's brigade of Mississippi and Tennessee volunteers, with three companies of the fourth regular infantry, again advanced directly upon the redoubt, while the first Ohio entered the outlying houses of the city in the rear of that work, about where the regulars had already made their unsuccessful attack. Suffering a most severe loss, the volunteers steadily continued their advance on the Tenería, and after being twice repulsed stormed the work, greatly aided, of course, by the fire of Captain Backus and his men, who occupied the tannery yard. The four pieces of artillery, a considerable supply of ammunition, and three officers, thirty privates, and some muleteers were captured at this point. The struggle for the redoubt had lasted almost incessantly from seven in the morning until noon.

No other advantage was obtained that day by the Americans. An advance into the northern part of the city was

found to be impracticable on account of the barricades near the bridge and the strong protection afforded by the breastworks and houses to the south of the brook; and therefore, after three unsuccessful efforts to carry the Diablo lunette, the day ended, the greater part of the American troops being ordered back to camp at about three in the afternoon, leaving only one battalion of regular infantry and one battalion of the first Kentucky regiment to hold the captured work. During the night some additional strength was given to that position, but intrenching tools were lacking and not much could be done.

The following day, Tuesday, the twenty-second of September, passed without any active operations in the lower part of the city. The citadel and other works continued to fire at parties exposed to their range and upon the Tenería redoubt, which was occupied at midday by Quitman's brigade of volunteers, relieving the guard left in it the preceding night. But the troops were greatly encouraged in the afternoon by seeing the American flag over the Bishop's Palace, indicating its capture by Worth.

During all this time it would seem that Ampudia had kept most of his command concentrated in and about the principal plaza. He now determined upon a still further concentration, involving an abandonment of the two remaining eastern redoubts. This decision was not, perhaps, so absurd as it seemed, for the well-built, flat-roofed houses near the Cathedral, and the tower of the Cathedral itself, were capable of being most effectually defended. About midnight on Tuesday, therefore, the Mexicans evacuated the defences near the lower part of the city. Only one hundred and fifty men were detailed to occupy the streets leading to the Bishop's Palace, and five hundred were left to man the citadel. The remainder of the now disorganized and demoralized force were assembled near the Cathedral.

Early on Wednesday morning Quitman, in command of the troops at Fort Tenería, discovered the abandonment of the defences to the south and west of the point he occupied, and at once reported the fact to General Taylor. Taylor,

in reply, sent Quitman orders to enter the city, covering his men by the houses and walls, and to advance carefully "as far as he might deem prudent." The remainder of the troops, under the orders of General Twiggs, were ordered out as a reserve, with the exception of Wood's regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, who were dismounted and ordered to co-operate with Quitman's brigade.

These troops advanced from house to house, and from square to square, very much as the Texans had advanced through the town of Béxar when they captured it from General Cos in the autumn of 1835, and reached a street but one square in the rear of the principal plaza. Their advance was that of which the sound reached Worth about ten o'clock that morning.

"This advance," Taylor reported, "was conducted vigorously, but with due caution, and, although destructive to the enemy, was attended with a small loss on our part." Nevertheless, Taylor determined to withdraw the troops from the city. His doing so seemed inexplicable; and the only reason he gave was that the men had been on duty all the previous night, and that he wished to concert with General Worth a combined attack upon the city. Quitman, however, was in no danger in holding the position he had gained; but under Taylor's orders Quitman's regiments and the second Texas fell back to the outer works, where they were relieved after nightfall by Hamer's brigade (Kentucky and Ohio).

Very soon after Quitman and his men had thus been withdrawn from the town Taylor received a note from Worth, informing him that, having heard the firing in the lower part of the city, he was about to make an attack at the upper end, as he found it had been evacuated by the enemy to a considerable distance. But Taylor still thought it inexpedient to change his dispositions, and therefore sent orders to Worth to suspend his advance until they could have an interview on the following morning. This note Worth apparently did not receive till after nightfall, when he had gained the houses near the Palacio Municipal.

On Thursday morning, before anything could be done, Taylor received a note from Ampudia proposing to evacuate the city and citadel, taking with him all the *personnel* and *matériel* of war. Taylor at once replied, declining to accede to the proposal and demanding "a complete surrender of the town and garrison, the latter as prisoners of war." Pending the receipt of a reply, he arranged verbally with Ampudia's representatives for a cessation of hostilities until twelve o'clock noon, at which hour he would expect to receive the answer of the Mexican general at General Worth's head-quarters.

Taylor's military reputation would have stood even higher than it did if he had insisted upon his demand for an unconditional surrender, and had announced his intention to move at once upon the enemy's works. Ampudia was, it would seem, in no condition to continue his resistance. But Taylor was willing to negotiate, and a long discussion followed as to the terms of surrender. It was finally agreed that the city and citadel should be evacuated; that the Mexican army, with all their arms and accoutrements and one battery of field artillery, should retire beyond a specified line; that neither party should advance beyond that line for a period of eight weeks, or until the orders or instructions of the two governments could be received; and that the Mexican flag, when struck at the citadel, might be saluted by its own battery.[1]

On Saturday, the twenty-sixth of September, the Mexican army therefore began evacuating the city. They were watched in their march with great interest by the American soldiers.

"The infantry," said a regular officer, "were miserably clad, brawny, thick-set fellows, chiefly shod with sandals; one regiment of Lancers

[1] Taylor's detailed reports of the operations at the easterly end of the town and of the terms of evacuation, with the subreports of his subordinate commanders, will be found in H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 83–102. Other accounts by eye-witnesses of the very confused fighting at the east end will be found in Grant, I, 110–118; Kenly, *Memoirs of a Maryland Volunteer*, 97–100, 105–120; Giddings, 159–190; Henry, 193–209; Johnston, *Life of Albert Sidney Johnston*, 136–145; Balbontin, 34–37.

were as fine looking men as I ever saw. Their horses were inferior horses; *one* of ours could ride over *three* of them. The streets were filled with followers of the army, mounted on everything, from a decent mustang to a humble, uncomplaining donkey. Some of the officers' wives, picturesquely wrapped in their gay-colored ponchos, were slowly riding after their chivalric husbands."[1]

A newspaper correspondent described the scene as follows:

"Two regiments of infantry led off, with colors flying, drums beating, and the trumpeters blowing with all their might. The fifers made all the noise they could. The men were all well armed, and the whole division seemed to be well appointed, with the exception of shoes. Three pieces of artillery were in the centre of the column, one six, one nine, and one twelve pounder. The line, marching four abreast, extended about one mile. The army was accompanied by a great many females; officers' wives on horseback, their faces muffled, and with hats on; the soldiers' wives were mounted on donkeys or were on foot, some of them carrying burdens that I would scarcely think of packing on mules."[2]

By Monday morning, the twenty-eighth of September, the evacuation of the city and citadel was complete.

The losses incurred by the two armies were probably approximately equal. In Worth's division there were nine killed and forty-six wounded, a total of fifty-five casualties. In the operations at the east end of the town the American losses were very much greater, being one hundred and eleven killed and three hundred and three wounded, almost all having been incurred on Monday in the operations that resulted in the capture of the Tenería redoubt. The Mexican losses, as usual, were not exactly ascertainable, although, as they fought for the most part behind intrenchments or stone-walls, they may have been less than those of the Americans.

Ampudia, in his official report, dated September 25, 1846, stated that after a brilliant contest, in which the enemy was repulsed with a loss of fifteen hundred men at various points, the Americans had managed to take possession of the com-

[1] Henry, 218.
[2] From George W. Kendall's letters, quoted in Reid, 211.

manding points of the Bishop's Palace and the hills to the south of it, as also of the detached work known as the Tenería, and had pushed their detachment through the houses toward the centre of the city, thus reaching to within half a gunshot of the principal plaza. Under these circumstances he had been requested by various commanders to propose an arrangement. They feared that an attempt on their part to cut a way through the American lines would result in the dispersal of their troops, and that nothing could be saved of their *matériel*. In view of these circumstances, and considering also the danger to the city, the scantiness of his ammunition, and the want of other supplies, he had acceded to proposals which resulted in the agreement of capitulation. By these means, he said, the national honor and that of the army had been saved.[1] He gave no figures either as to the number of troops under his command or the casualties sustained.

The operations which ended in the fall of Monterey were severely criticised from a military point of view, principally on the ground of the rash division of the American force by detaching Worth to attack the western side of the city. Napoleon's maxim, that nothing is so rash or contrary to principle as to make a flank march before an army in position, especially when this army occupies heights at the foot of which you are forced to defile, was quoted against Taylor. He was also criticised for want of caution in making what were called "experimental" attacks upon the eastern end of the city, and for his failure to push his advantage on Wednesday morning, when Quitman advanced through the streets and houses to the neighborhood of the plaza.

These criticisms might have carried greater weight if Taylor had not succeeded in the end; and other military writers have pronounced them without foundation, relying, in great part, upon Taylor's knowledge of the character of the enemy as a justification for dividing his force. Certainly the troops opposed to him had thus far manifested so little enterprise that he might be excused for taking some

[1] Ros Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 57.

liberties with them. They had failed to oppose his advance up the river and his advance from Camargo to Monterey. They made no serious attempt to attack Worth during his flanking movement from the wood of Santo Domingo to the Saltillo road. Their cavalry was relatively numerous, and although it did make some attempts upon the slightly guarded American camp and upon Taylor's troops in their marches between the camp and the city, these attacks were not at any time vigorous. If, therefore, Taylor relied on the want of enterprise of his opponents, the result fully justified his prevision.[1]

Ampudia was also the subject of criticism. His plan of standing strictly on the defensive, it was said, was most advantageous to the Americans. Not only was no attempt ever made to recover points that had been lost, but no sallies were made in aid of partial defences or to aid in repelling attacks. His abandonment of the Diablo and Libertad redoubts on the night of the twenty-second was thought to have been a great mistake; and his dismounting his cavalry and using them as infantry on the roofs of the houses the next day was another blunder, as their short-range carbines were useless in such fighting and the men could have been of far more service outside the town.[2] Ampudia could point to no successes to justify his acts; but he also might, perhaps, if he had been so minded, have offered as an explanation his knowledge of the men composing the two armies.

[1] Reference may be made to Ripley, I, 249–257; Stevens, *Campaigns of the Rio Grande and Mexico*, 26–29; Henry, 185, 201, etc.; Howard, *General Taylor*, 199–204.

[2] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 50.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN DEVELOPED

On Sunday evening, the eleventh of October, 1846, despatches were received in Washington announcing the result of Taylor's operations at Monterey. President Polk and his cabinet were not much elated over the news. The earlier despatches from Taylor had not contained anything that would lead to an anticipation of so determined and sanguinary a resistance on the part of the Mexican forces, and the terms of capitulation granted to General Ampudia were such that the President thought them a great mistake.

"In agreeing to this armistice," the President noted at once on receiving the news, "Gen'l Taylor violated his express orders & I regret that I cannot approve his course. He had the enemy in his power & should have taken them prisoners, deprived them of their arms, discharged them on their parole of honour, and preserved the advantage which he had obtained by pushing on without delay further into the country, if the force at his command justified it. Our troops fought well, though with some loss of officers & men. It was a great mistake in Gen'l Taylor to agree to an armistice. It will only enable the Mexican army to reorganise and recruit so as to make another stand."[1]

The next morning, at a cabinet meeting, all the members present were unanimous in condemning Taylor's course in granting such terms to the Mexicans, and Taylor's reasons, as stated in his despatch, were considered inadequate. The reasons he had alleged were "the gallant defence of the town" and the fact of the recent change of government in Mexico, which Taylor believed would be favorable to the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 181.

interests of peace.[1] The cabinet were of the opinion that only two valid reasons could have justified Taylor's action; first, that he could not have captured the Mexican army, and, second, that the Mexican government was really disposed to make peace. As to these two reasons, the opinion of the cabinet was thus stated by the President:

"If the first reason existed Gen'l Taylor has not stated it in his despatches, and we have no information to justify the existence of this reason, though it may have existed. If the second reason was the one upon which he acted, then Gen'l Ampudia has overreached & deceived him. . . . The Cabinet were united in the opinion that if Gen'l Taylor had captured the Mexican army, deprived them of their arms, and discharged them upon their parole of honour not to bear arms during the war or until they were regularly exchanged, that it would have probably ended the war with Mexico. . . . It was agreed unanimously that orders should be forthwith sent to Gen'l Taylor to terminate the armistice to which he had agreed, and to prosecute the war with energy and vigor. It was agreed that this should be done in terms neither to approve or condemn his conduct in granting the capitulation and the armistice. All agreed that the officers and men had fought gallantly and deserved the thanks of the country, but regretted that the victory had not been crowned by the capture of the enemy's army."[2]

On the next day Marcy read to the cabinet a draft of his letter to Taylor, which was "critically and carefully examined," and as finally agreed to was sent from the War Department on the same day. Marcy began by praising the skill, courage, and gallant conduct displayed by the troops, which, he said, merited the warmest expressions of gratitude and praise. The President, however, regretted that Taylor had not deemed it advisable to insist upon the terms which he had first proposed.

"The circumstances which dictated doubtless justified the change. The President, uninformed of these circumstances, does not know in what degree the recent change in the government of Mexico may have contributed to this result. Certain it is, however, that the present rulers of that republic have not yet given any evidence that they are

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Sept. 25, 1846; H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 79.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 183–185.

'favorable to the interests of peace.' Of this you will have already been informed by my despatch of the 22d ultimo. . . . The government is fully persuaded that if you had been aware of the special reasons disclosed in the despatch of the 22d ultimo, and the intentions of the government still entertained, you would not have acceded to the suspension of hostilities for even the limited period specified in the articles of capitulation; but as its continuance depends upon the orders of your government, you are instructed to give the requisite notice that the armistice is to cease at once, and that each party is at liberty to resume and prosecute hostilities without restriction."[1]

Taylor replied on the eighth of November, giving in much greater detail the reasons which induced him to agree to the terms of capitulation. His force, he said, was inadequate to invest Monterey so closely as to prevent the escape of the garrison. If he had insisted on more rigorous terms than those imposed, the result would have been the escape of the body of the Mexican force, with the destruction of its artillery and magazines at the expense of valuable lives and much damage to the city. The consideration of humanity had outweighed in his judgment the doubtful advantages to be gained by the resumption of the attack upon the town.

"In regard to the temporary cessation of hostilities, the fact that we are not at this moment (within eleven days of the termination of the period fixed by the convention) prepared to move forward in force, is a sufficient explanation of the military reasons which dictated this suspension of arms. It paralyzed the enemy during a period when, from the want of necessary means, we could not possibly move. . . . The task of fighting and beating the enemy is among the least difficult that we encounter: the great question of supplies necessarily controls all the operations in a country like this. . . .

"I have touched the prominent military points involved in the convention of Monterey. There were other considerations which weighed with the commissioners in framing, and with myself in approving, the articles of the convention. In the conference with General Ampudia I was distinctly told by him that he had invited it to spare the further effusion of blood, and because General Santa Anna had declared himself favorable to peace. I knew that our government had made propositions to that of Mexico to negotiate, and I deemed that the change of government in that country since my last instructions fully warranted me in entertaining considerations of policy. My grand motive in mov-

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Oct. 13, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 355.

ing forward with very limited supplies had been to increase the inducements of the Mexican government to negotiate for peace. Whatever may be the actual views or disposition of the Mexican rulers, or of General Santa Anna, it is not unknown to the government that I had the very best reason for believing the statement of General Ampudia to be true. It was my opinion at the time of the convention, and it has not been changed, that the liberal treatment of the Mexican army, and the suspension of arms, would exert none but a favorable influence in our behalf.

"The result of the entire operation has been to throw the Mexican army back more than 300 miles to the city of San Luis Potosi, and to open the country to us, as far as we choose to penetrate it, up to the same point."[1]

A newspaper controversy naturally followed, in which the wisdom or unwisdom of Taylor's action was vigorously discussed. His course was warmly defended in a letter published in the *Washington Union* from Taylor's son-in-law, Colonel Jefferson Davis, of the Mississippi regiment, dated January 6, 1847, in which the details of the discussions between the American and Mexican commissioners were set out.[2]

The armistice agreed to at Monterey was all the more unwelcome at Washington because, prior to learning of the results of Taylor's movements, and about the time when he was beginning his march from Camargo, the authorities had again turned their attention to questions of strategy, and the suspension of hostilities introduced a new element into their problem. They had learned on the first of September of the occupation of California. On the next day a letter was addressed to General Taylor asking for information in relation to the topography of the country in the vicinity of Tampico and his views as to the effect of taking possession

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Nov. 8, 1846; *ibid.*, 350.

[2] The letter is printed in Reid, 205–209. Davis was one of the commissioners. The others were General Worth and Governor Henderson, of Texas. Jefferson Davis married, in 1835, General Taylor's second daughter, much against her father's will. She died shortly after the marriage. Before the Mexican war, and on the occasion of Davis's second marriage, to Miss Howell, he and General Taylor became reconciled and continued warm friends until the latter's death. The conduct of Taylor in respect to the capitulation is vigorously criticised by Ripley in his *War with Mexico*, I, 267–268, and warmly defended by Stevens in his *Campaigns of the Rio Grande*, etc., 29–32.

of the port and penetrating the enemy's country from that as a base, and also as to the amount and kind of force necessary. It was stated to be the opinion of the War Department that fifteen hundred or two thousand men would be enough to take and hold possession of Tampico.[1] The original of this letter never reached Taylor, but falling into Mexican hands seems to have been the cause of the subsequent hasty abandonment of Tampico.

Without knowledge of the loss of this despatch, the War Department on the twenty-second of September, at the very moment Taylor was attacking Monterey, addressed him another letter, based upon the assumption that by the time he received it he would have reached Monterey and perhaps Saltillo, and would be able to offer a definite opinion of the possibility of progressing beyond the latter point. The immediate incident which called out this letter was the receipt on the nineteenth of September of Rejón's reply to the overtures for peace.[2] The President, on reading the reply, had reached the conclusions that Tampico should be seized at once, that the mode of carrying on the war with Mexico should be changed, and that instead of paying for supplies they should be levied on the country. The despatch to Taylor of September 22, therefore enclosed a copy of Rejón's reply, and instructed Taylor to levy contributions on the country, provided he was satisfied he could get abundant supplies for his forces in that manner, but otherwise he was to get what he could by purchase.[3] The despatch then went on to state the intentions of the government as to the next campaign. The plan of the American government was stated to be to take possession of the department of Tamaulipas, or some of the principal places in it, at the earliest practicable period. A force of three or four thousand men, acting in co-operation with the navy,

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Sept. 2, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 339, 340.
[2] See page 245, above.
[3] Taylor replied to this part of the letter in a separate despatch, to the effect that unless he paid for what the army needed he could get nothing. The plan of levying on the country he considered entirely impracticable.—(Taylor to Adjutant-General, Oct. 28, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 354.)

was thought to be necessary for this purpose; but the government was still without sufficiently accurate knowledge of the country to determine definitely as to the manner of conducting this enterprise." Orders had been given to the navy to take Tampico, and it was expected that the place would be captured by them before Taylor's troops could reach that point.[1]

At the same time, a copy of the despatch to Taylor was sent to General Patterson, in command of the troops on the Rio Grande, and he was very injudiciously informed that the land expedition into southern Tamaulipas would be under his immediate command, and his views as to the amount of force necessary were requested. Patterson was directed to reply "without the delay of sending through General Taylor," and to give his opinions and state all the facts having a bearing on the proposed expedition.[2]

Taylor received the Secretary's letter of the twenty-second of September at Monterey about October 12, and replied to it in detail on October 15. He pointed out, in the first place, that, under the terms of the armistice, the proposed advance could not at once be made. In the next place, he stated that Ampudia's force had fallen back from Saltillo to San Luis Potosí, where it had joined the main body of the Mexican army.[3]

"Whether the withdrawal of the forces to San Luis be intended to draw us into the country, far from supplies and support, or whether it be a political movement connected with Santa Anna's return to power, it is impossible to say; it is sufficient for my present argument to know that a heavy force is assembling in our front. . . . In view of the above facts, I hazard nothing in saying that a column, to move on San Luis from Saltillo, should, to insure success, be at least 20,000 strong, of which 10,000 should be regular troops. After much reflection, I consider the above as the smallest number of *effective* troops that could be employed on this service, without incurring the hazard of disaster, and perhaps defeat. There would be required, besides, to

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Sept. 22, 1846; *ibid.*, 341.
[2] Marcy to Patterson, Sept. 22, 1846; *ibid.*, 344.
[3] This force, when it joined Santa Anna, numbered 5,795.—(Santa Anna, *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 66.)

keep open our long line, protect the depots, and secure the country already gained, a force of 5,000 men; this without including the force necessary to send to Tampico, to take or hold that place."

As to a simultaneous movement on San Luis and Tampico, suggested in Marcy's letter of September 22, Taylor said that as he had only half the force that he considered necessary to march on one of the points, it would be quite impossible to march on both. In case of an advance on San Luis, he considered the possession of Tampico indispensable; but he had not previously suggested it on account of "the known exposure of the place to the ravages of yellow fever." Under all these circumstances, he thought it was for the government to determine whether to prosecute the war by directing an active campaign against San Luis and the capital, or whether the country already gained should be held and a defensive attitude assumed. In the latter case, "the general line of the Sierra Madre" might very well be taken; but even then, with the enemy in force in his front, it might be imprudent to detach three or four thousand men. If, therefore, the co-operation of the army was deemed essential to the success of the expedition against Tampico, he trusted it would be postponed for the present.

On the whole, he was of the opinion that the best course to take was to occupy a defensive line along the Rio Grande; or, if a larger army could be spared, to establish a line with a strong force at Monterey, and an advance at Saltillo, with small bodies at Santa Fe, Chihuahua, Monclova, Linares, Victoria, and Tampico. If, however, the government determined "to strike a decisive blow at Mexico," he was of opinion that the force should land near Vera Cruz and march thence on the capital. For this service he thought an army of twenty-five thousand men, of which at least ten thousand should be regular troops, would be required. He ended with a vigorous protest against orders being sent directly to his subordinates from the War Department.[1]

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Oct. 15, 1846; *ibid.*, 351–354. The line traced by Taylor from Santa Fe to Tampico would have been not less than fourteen hundred miles long.

Owing doubtless to difficulties of communication, Taylor's letter—which was far from offering a clear-cut solution of the problems of the war—was not received in Washington until November 20. It produced a very bad impression upon the President's mind.

"It was written," he noted, "in bad temper, and was wholly unwarranted by the despatch of the Secretary of War to which it was a reply. . . . I was very indignant at Gen'l Taylor's letter & directed the Secretary of War to prepare a proper answer. It is perfectly manifest that Gen'l Taylor is very hostile to the administration and seeks a cause of quarrel with it. This he shall not have unless he places himself wholly in the wrong, as indeed he has already done. He is evidently a weak man and has been made giddy with the idea of the presidency. He is most ungrateful for I promoted him, as I now think beyond his deserts, and without reference to his politics. I am now satisfied that he is a narrow minded bigoted partisan, without resources and wholly unqualified for the command he holds."[1]

But while Taylor was writing the letter which gave so much offence—and of course more than a month before its receipt in Washington—the cabinet had come to the conclusion that an expedition to Vera Cruz was perfectly practicable and that the town could be taken, with the co-operation of the navy, by landing a force of no more than three or four thousand men.[2] Having reached this conclusion, the President next brought before the cabinet the very important question—

"whether Gen'l Taylor should advance with the main column of the army further into the interior of Mexico than Monterey where he now is, or whether he should hold & fortify that position and also hold the adjacent Northern Provinces, and send a part of his force to co-operate with the expedition ordered on the 22nd ultimo to invade Tamaulipas and by a combined operation of the Navy and the army to take Tampico and, if practicable, Vera Cruz. The subject was fully discussed, and the Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that under existing circumstances Gen'l Taylor should not advance beyond Monterey and the positions necessary to secure that City and the Department of New Leon of which it is the Capital. . . . It was agreed also that Gen'l Taylor should be authorised to stop Gen'l Wool's expedition to Chihuahua, if he deemed it proper to do so. . . .

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 249 (Nov. 21, 1846). [2] *Ibid.*, 196.

Subsequent events have rendered the objects expected to be attained by the expedition to Chihuahua less certain, & indeed comparatively unimportant. Moreover the contemplated expedition to Tampico and Vera Cruz is regarded as much more important. It was agreed therefore to leave it to Gen'l Taylor's discretion to order Gen'l Wool to abandon the Chihuahua expedition and join the main army, as this would enable Gen'l T. to spare 2,000 additional troops or more for the Tampico and Vera Cruz expedition."

Despatches to the above effect were to be sent to Taylor and were to be carried by Mr. Robert M. McLane, a son of the minister to England, who was also to be intrusted with verbal messages to General Taylor.

"Mr. McLane is a graduate of West Point, was many years in the army, and is a very intelligent gentleman. His mission to the army will be more important than as the mere bearer of despatches."[1]

On Thursday, October 22, 1846, the Secretary of War accordingly presented to the cabinet the draft of a despatch to Taylor setting out the views of the cabinet in regard to the prosecution of the war. For more than two hours the subject was under consideration, and the opinion of each member of the cabinet individually was taken. The despatch, as finally agreed upon, was then read to Robert McLane, with whom the President and the Secretary of War had a full conversation in relation to the subject.

Marcy also, with the President's consent, stated the conclusions of the cabinet in confidence to General Scott, who, as Marcy reported, interposed objections to the contemplated Vera Cruz expedition, but expressed a desire to command it himself, and thought that twenty-five thousand men or more were necessary before it could be undertaken with safety. The President, however, dismissed this subject with the short statement that, after Scott's letters of the previous May, he was unwilling to assign him to the command and considered his objections intended to embarrass the administration.[2]

The despatch of October 22 to Taylor, about which so

[1] *Ibid.*, 198-200.

[2] *Ibid.*, 204, 205.

much care had been taken, began by stating that Santa Anna was at the head of the war party in Mexico and appeared to have entered with zeal upon his duties as general-in-chief. It was thought not improbable that he might succeed in collecting and keeping together a considerable force, although this might be intended rather for operations against domestic than foreign enemies. This preliminary confession must have cost Polk's government a severe searching of spirit after they had so deliberately facilitated Santa Anna's return to Mexico; but at least it was well for them that they did confess their fault and did fully and frankly recognize the zeal and energy with which Santa Anna was at work collecting an army.

The instructions to Taylor next went on to discuss the difficulties which appeared to exist in the way of his marching beyond Monterey, and the importance of securing his position there and keeping open his line of communication with the Rio Grande. He might use his own discretion in regard to any forward movement, provided the enemy's forces were withdrawn or ascertained to be in small numbers; but it was thought that a permanent position should hardly be taken as far in advance as Saltillo. With respect to General Wool, it was suggested whether it would not be best to have his forces united with those of Taylor's; but precautions were to be taken in that event to secure the safety of the troops which General Kearny was intending to detach for Chihuahua to join Wool at that point.

Taylor was further informed that, "upon a more full consideration of the subject," it was believed that Vera Cruz might be taken; that with the co-operation of the navy four thousand troops would suffice, of which about half should be of the regular army; that it appeared to be scarcely possible to get the requisite number of regulars without withdrawing some of those under Taylor's command; and that if Taylor was not going to make any forward movement, it was presumed the requisite force for the expedition to Vera Cruz could be detached by him without interfering with his plans of operation.

"Whilst the government is anxious that nothing should occur to prevent the expedition to Vera Cruz, regarding it of great importance, yet if by withdrawing from your immediate command the force necessary for this purpose the army with you may be placed in danger, this expedition must, for the present, be either deferred or abandoned; a result deeply to be regretted. . . . It is desirable to avoid delay; you will, therefore, unless it materially interferes with your own plan of operations, or weakens you too much in your present position, make the necessary arrangements for having four thousand men (of whom fifteen hundred or two thousand should be regular troops) ready to embark for Vera Cruz or such other destination as may be given them, at the earliest practicable period."

In conclusion, it was suggested that General Patterson should be placed in command of the expedition against Vera Cruz, that General Worth should command the regulars who were to form a part of his force, and that a brigadier-general to be selected by Taylor should command the volunteers.[1]

A copy of this despatch was sent a week later to General Patterson, with the explanation that the fitting out of an expedition to Vera Cruz was a suggestion which depended upon Taylor's concurrence. If he approved of detaching troops for any expedition, it would then become an important question whether such a force should be directed against Vera Cruz or confined to operations in the department of Tamaulipas. The taking of Vera Cruz, it was thought, would strike an effective blow at the enemy; but it was doubted whether a sufficient force could be assembled for that purpose without materially interfering with other operations. If Vera Cruz should, all circumstances considered, be found to be too dangerous an enterprise to be attempted, then an effort should be made by the army to capture Tampico; but definite directions could not be given from Washington, as the movements of the expedition "must depend in a great measure upon the condition of things at the moment of action."[2]

[1] Marcy to Taylor, Oct. 22, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 363-367.

[2] Marcy to Patterson, Oct. 28, 1846; *ibid.*, 367, 368.

In all this painful uncertainty only one thing seemed clear. If the proposed expedition under Patterson was to be directed to Vera Cruz it would have no defined object beyond the mere capture of the city—a result which would annoy the Mexicans, relieve the American navy from the difficulty of maintaining an effective blockade, and impress the American people with the idea that something was being done. It could not by any possibility inflict a fatal or even a dangerous blow on Mexico.

These despatches to the generals in the field faithfully portrayed the perplexity of the government at Washington during the month of October. The great object was to avoid the necessity of calling at that time for additional volunteers. The elections for Congress were coming on in the course of a fortnight. It had been the hope of the government that the war would be neither prolonged nor expensive. It was expected that brandishing the sword in one hand and tendering the olive-branch in the other would induce the Mexicans to listen to proposals for buying a peace, and for this purpose Santa Anna's return to Mexico had been encouraged. But it had now become plain to the President that Santa Anna was not to be relied upon, and that peace could only be gained by conquest and after a long and costly war. This unpalatable truth was becoming evident also to the country, and the administration considered it highly impolitic to embark upon extensive expeditions, or to call for new troops, until after the elections should have shown the temper of the American people.

General Taylor, however, had no need of paying attention to considerations of that sort, and he therefore now urged upon the government the necessity for forward movements, which would necessarily require considerable reinforcements.

Before receiving the instructions from the Secretary of War of October 22, Taylor had made up his own mind that the moment the armistice expired he would move forward to Saltillo; and accordingly, on November 8, general orders were issued directing General Worth to march on

November 12 with the artillery battalion, two regiments of infantry, Blanchard's company of Louisiana volunteers, and one battery of field artillery.[1] Taylor at the time he reported this movement to Washington also stated that he had taken the first steps toward organising an expedition in the opposite direction, namely, to Tampico. Recent information, he added, was to the effect that Tampico had been entirely evacuated, but he deemed this hardly credible. He had learned that the Mexican army was still at San Luis, some twelve thousand strong, and he also learned that the want of water on the road from Saltillo to San Luis would render his own advance beyond the former point impracticable. It might also be inferred from the letter, although Taylor did not so state, that he regarded an advance by Santa Anna from San Luis Potosí to Saltillo as being equally impossible.[2]

Three days after the date of this announcement of Taylor's intentions, Robert McLane arrived at head-quarters bearing the instructions from the War Department of October 22. These instructions, it will be remembered, pointed out the risk of an advance beyond Monterey, although such a movement was not positively forbidden, and informed Taylor that it was proposed to send a small expedition to Vera Cruz, which would necessitate withdrawing a part of the troops under his command. He at once replied, reaffirming his intention to advance, as he deemed the occupation of Saltillo important, chiefly "as a necessary outpost of the main force at Monterey, covering, as it does, the important defile which leads from the low country to the tableland, and also the route to Monclova." He also considered it important as controlling a fertile region from which supplies could be drawn, as being the capital of the state of Coahuila, and as necessary for carrying out the policy of a defensive line.

With regard to the expedition against Vera Cruz, he expressed his conviction that four thousand men would be

[1] See Order No. 139; *ibid.*, 362.
[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Nov. 9, 1846; *ibid.*, 361.

quite too few for the purpose contemplated. In his despatch of October 15 he had stated that twenty-five thousand men, of which ten thousand should be regulars, was the least force that should make a descent in that quarter, with a view to marching on the capital. Ten thousand men, he thought, might invest and take Vera Cruz; but considering the probable opposition from the Mexicans and "the uncertainty of weather during the winter season, rendering our communication with the fleet liable to interruption," he believed ten thousand men as small a force as should be ventured. He could not spare that number, but he could send four thousand men; and if six thousand were added from the United States, he believed that the proposed expedition might be undertaken with a promise of success.

"I conceive it all-important," he added, "having in view the Mexican character, that as little should be left to accident as possible, and that we should be careful, as far as human foresight can provide, to avoid the smallest liability to disaster. A descent upon a hostile coast, notoriously dangerous, and in an inclement season of the year, is an operation requiring the most careful preparations and exact management, and possessing, under the most favorable circumstances, more or less elements of failure. It seems the part of prudence, therefore, to take a sufficient force to meet any contingency that may arise."[1]

A day or two afterward, therefore, in accordance with Taylor's announced intentions, and in the face of the orders from the War Department, Worth and his men marched from Monterey for Saltillo, and were accompanied by Taylor himself with an escort of cavalry. Saltillo was occupied on November 16 without opposition, the troops were quartered in the town, and reconnoissances were made some twenty-five miles to the south without finding any signs of the enemy, and thereupon Taylor returned to Monterey.[2]

In other quarters events had occurred during the month of November which to a certain extent changed the conditions affecting the further prosecution of the war. In the

[1] Same to same, Nov. 12, 1846; *ibid.*, 374–376.
[2] Same to same, Nov. 24, 1846; *ibid.*, 377.

first place, General Wool, with his column, had successfully invaded Mexico. He had under him six hundred and twenty-two regulars, composed of a battery of artillery, five companies of dragoons, and three companies of infantry. He also had two regiments of infantry from Illinois and one mounted regiment from Arkansas, numbering, in all, two thousand three hundred and ninety-nine volunteers.

With this force of over three thousand men Wool set out from San Antonio late in September under instructions to proceed to Chihuahua—nearly due west—and he crossed the Rio Grande near the presidio of San Juan Bautista on October 11, 1846. A march west from there was impracticable, and he turned south. Following the line of the present railway that crosses the river at Eagle Pass, he marched through Nava to Monclova, which he entered on November 3, and there he was met by orders from Taylor informing him of the armistice entered into at Monterey, and instructing him not to advance until its expiration.

At Monclova Wool began to discover some important facts about the topography of Mexico. He discovered that the only practicable route he could take to reach Chihuahua would be to go toward Saltillo, and then, shortly before reaching it, to turn west upon the road leading through Parras. Under these circumstances he decided that a march to Chihuahua was useless. He thought he could seize Saltillo and thence march on San Luis Potosí; and he therefore wrote to Taylor on November 14, by Lieutenant W. B. Franklin, of the engineers, and again on the nineteenth by his aid, Lieutenant Irvin McDowell, urging the importance of an early movement. He urged this upon the ground that inaction was exceedingly injurious to the volunteers, who were getting restless, and though he had thus far succeeded in controlling them, he found it increasingly difficult to do so.

McDowell on his return brought orders notifying Wool that the Chihuahua expedition was abandoned and ordering him to advance and occupy Parras. Wool, however, had already started from Monclova, and he occupied Parras on December 5, not having exchanged a hostile shot in

his entire march of over three hundred miles since entering Mexican territory.[1]

The navy also had not been idle during the six months since war was declared. Throughout the oppressive heat of the summer and the occasional gales of early autumn, the home squadron under command of Commodore Conner had maintained a strict blockade of Vera Cruz.

"While the people illuminated their cities," one of the blockading officers wrote, "and lighted bonfires in the country, in celebration of the victories of the army, the toils and hardships of the navy were not only forgotten, but this branch of the service was loaded with obloquy for not performing impossibilities. With the exception of Vera Cruz, there was no town in the whole Gulf coast of Mexico, within effective cannon range of which, a sloop-of-war could approach. The maritime towns of the enemy were more effectually defended by reefs, sandbars, and shallows than were the inland towns by redoubts and intrenchments. . . . Although Vera Cruz, by reason of the dangerous ground in its vicinity is one of the hardest ports in the world to blockade, especially during the violent gales of winter, I venture to say that the history of no other blockade presents so few instances of the successful attempts of cupidity to evade the vigilance of cruisers."[2]

The wearisome round of duty was, however, varied by attempts to attack some of the other points along the Gulf coast, although at first without any great success. In August and again in October, 1846, Commodore Conner endeavored to capture the small vessels composing the Mexican navy which had been placed for safety in the harbor at Alvarado, a little over thirty miles south of Vera Cruz. The strong current and the shoals forming the shifting bar off this entrance combined to make it extremely difficult to enter the harbor—even with vessels drawing only ten feet of water—in the face of three Mexican batteries that commanded the channel; and both attempts were unsuccessful, although no serious losses were sustained.

[1] Detailed reports of this prosperous march, with maps, sketches, and topographical details by Lieutenant W. B. Franklin and other officers, are printed in Sen. Doc. 32, 31 Cong., 1 sess., 5-61.

[2] Semmes, 77, 78.

A more fortunate result attended an expedition late in October under Commodore Matthew C. Perry, the second in command of the squadron. On October 23 Perry with the steam frigate *Mississippi*, a small steamer to serve as a tug, a steam revenue cutter and four schooners, reached the bar of the River Tabasco and captured the town of Frontera without difficulty, together with two small useful steamboats and some other vessels. The next morning the small steam-boats, with three of the schooners and some barges in tow, steamed up the rapid river, and on the following day, October 25, arrived in front of the town of San Juan Bautista, the capital of the department of Tabasco, which was taken after a little desultory firing. Commodore Perry, having no adequate force to land and hold the town, seized as prizes five merchant vessels and returned to join the commodore off Vera Cruz.[1]

Early in November, pursuant to orders from the Navy Department dated September 22, Conner began his preparations for the descent on Tampico.[2] His departure from Vera Cruz was considerably delayed for want of provisions, but on the tenth and eleventh of November, three sailing frigates left, with instructions to rendezvous off Lobos Island, where good anchorage could be found in case of bad weather.[3] On November 12 the *Mississippi* and *Princeton* steam-ships followed, towing two small steam-boats and four schooners; and at daylight on November 14 the whole force reached the bar of Tampico, where they fell in with the vessel blockading the port. Her commanding officer had carefully examined the bar and was prepared to act as pilot. By ten o'clock in the morning a detachment of three hundred officers, seamen, and marines in boats, together with the schooners—all in tow of the two small steamers—crossed the bar and passed up the river without

[1] See reports in H. R. Doc. 4, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 630–639.

[2] These orders were discussed by the cabinet on Sept. 19 and 20, immediately after receipt of Rejón's reply declining negotiations for peace.—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 145–148.)

[3] This small island lies about seven miles off shore, and sixty miles south of the Tampico entrance.

opposition, the fort at the entrance as well as the town having been abandoned by their garrisons more than two weeks before. The town was at once peaceably occupied by Conner's force.

"The excitement upon our arrival," Conner reported, "was trifling, and has since entirely subsided. The inhabitants that are left appear not to have the least objection to this change."

As a military post, he considered the possession of Tampico to be of the greatest importance; and he wrote that a garrison of three thousand troops should be supplied, which would be amply sufficient to hold the place against any Mexican force that could be sent against it. Two merchant vessels and three Mexican gun-boats were made prizes in the river.[1]

Immediately after capturing Tampico, Conner despatched Commodore Perry in the *Mississippi* to the United States with the news of this important event, and an urgent request for troops to garrison the place, as it was considered that the large detachments from the ships left them too short-handed to be exposed off the dangerous bar of Tampico during the frequent "northers." Perry succeeded so well in his mission that he persuaded the authorities of the army to send reinforcements direct to Tampico without consulting General Taylor—very much to the displeasure of the latter. But Taylor, having received the news of the occupation of Tampico, himself sent orders to General Patterson to despatch troops thither, so that early in December the town was adequately garrisoned.[2]

About this same time events had also occurred at home which greatly affected the views of the administration. Of these, the most important were the congressional elections on the third of November, which must have proved a bitter

[1] Conner to Mason, Nov. 17, 1846; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1171–1173. The details as to the abandonment of Tampico are set out at some length, with many accusations of incompetence and treachery against the Mexican commanders, in *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 78–90.

[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Nov. 26 and Dec. 14, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 378–381.

disappointment to the President and his cabinet, and forewarned them of the domestic difficulties with which they would soon have to contend. It was never unusual or surprising for an administration in its second year, when suffering from the curse of patronage, to lose the House of Representatives, and Polk's unimpressive character and his lack of the essentials of leadership added nothing to the popularity of his party; while his undertaking a war which—in the northern and eastern parts of the country at least—was much disliked by a large part of the community, was another cause of defeat in an election that was not very keenly contested. The result was that the Whigs in the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Congress (which was to meet in December, 1847) had a small majority, but enough to threaten embarrassment to the administration.[1]

As soon as the elections were over, Senator Benton returned to Washington, where he arrived on the sixth of November, and on the following evening he called and had a long conversation with the President as to the proper manner of prosecuting the Mexican war.

"He expressed," Polk wrote, "the opinion that a bold blow should be struck at once. He thought the City of Vera Cruz should be taken at once & with it would fall the Castle at that place, & that after this was done there should be a rapid crushing movement made from Vera Cruz on the City of Mexico. He said that commissioners composed of the first men in the country of both political parties, should accom-

[1] The numbers were 117 Whigs, 110 Democrats, and 1 "Native American." The views of Buchanan as to the causes of the defeat in Pennsylvania and the views of the President as to the defeat in New York are set out in Polk's *Diary*, II, 217, 218. Buchanan blamed the recent tariff bill. The President thought that the main cause in New York was the lukewarmness "of that portion of the Democratic party calling themselves Old Hunkers. This faction shall hereafter receive no favours at my hands if I know it." In the slang of New York politics, the "old hunkers" were the supporters of Texas annexation—"northern men with southern principles"—whose leaders were Daniel S. Dickinson and William L. Marcy. The "barnburners" were the pro-Van Buren, anti-Texas men, or "radical Democrats," who were likened to the farmer who burned his barn to clear it of rats. Their leaders were Silas Wright, John A. Dix and others; and from them was ultimately evolved the Free-Soil Democracy. Wilmot would have been, in New York, a barnburner. Of course the President could not have carried out his hasty threat against the hunkers so long as Marcy remained in his cabinet.

pany the Head Quarters of the army, who were authorised to offer peace before a battle, during the battle, & after it was over. He said this had often been done in the European wars. . . . He condemned the policy which had been suggested in some quarters of holding the Mexican territory which we had acquired, & not prosecuting the war further into the Mexican territory. He said the war would be much protracted by such a policy, & might not be ended for years. He said further the late elections have gone against the administration & that if such a policy of inactivity was adopted the patriotic spirit of the country would flag & the Democratic party would be overthrown. He said ours were a go-ahead people, and that our only policy either to obtain a peace or save ourselves was to press the war boldly."[1]

This conversation with Benton, coming on the heels of the defeat of the Democrats in the congressional elections, proved to be the turning point in the conduct of the war.

As it happened, on the morning of that same day the cabinet had been discussing the question of appropriations for the War Department, and Buchanan "was of opinion that we should hold what we had." Marcy believed that fifteen thousand regulars and twenty-five thousand volunteers would be a force necessary to prosecute the war with proper vigor and that "if a war of invasion was to be pushed into the heart of Mexico, a less number would not answer." The general question of a plan of operations was left for future decision, but it was unanimously agreed that the estimates for the next fiscal year should be made on the basis of an army of thirty-five thousand men in all.

During the next few days Benton and the President were in constant communication, the former insisting that the mere capture of Vera Cruz would not result in peace unless it was followed by an attack upon the city of Mexico. This naturally led to a discussion of the proper person to command so important and difficult an expedition, and Polk expressed his opinion of General Taylor as "a brave officer but not a man of capacity enough for such a command." Benton concurred, and said also that he had no confidence in General Scott.

[1] *Ibid.*, 221-223.

"Some other officers were named by me," Polk continued in his diary. "He then said that there ought to be a Lieutenant-General of the army who should be General in chief. He said it required a man of talents and resources as well as a military man for such a command, & that with a view to obtain peace more depended upon the talents & energy of the officer than upon mere bravery. He then said that if such an office was created by Congress, he would be willing to accept the command himself."[1]

This amazing proposal of Benton's seems to have awakened no surprise in the President's mind nor (with his constitutional lack of humor) was he at all able to see its ridiculous features. He gravely informed the cabinet of his conversation, and again there was a long discussion as to the mode of conducting the war, which again ended in no decision being arrived at, it being deemed prudent to wait for Taylor's answer to the despatch of September 22.[2] Day after day the President and his various advisers talked over these questions. Taylor's answer was received on the tenth of November, but "contained no satisfactory information." Marcy was "disappointed and dissatisfied," and the President thought Taylor was trying to shift responsibility from himself. More and more, therefore, the President turned to Benton, a man who was never troubled by doubts or misgivings or diffidence.

But the President told Benton that he did not think it probable Congress would create the office of lieutenant-general, and Benton declined a proposal to make him a major-general, as he would then be the junior in that rank. He repeated his views as to "a large and overpowering force" marching upon the city of Mexico, which he insisted was the only mode of bringing the war to a successful end. Buchanan, however, still remained strongly opposed to sending any expedition against the city of Mexico, because he thought "such an expedition would cost a vast sum of money, that it was doubtful whether it could be successful, and if it could, there was no object to be obtained by it, as it would not, as he thought, facilitate peace." Finally,

[1] *Ibid.*, 227. [2] *Ibid.*, 228–230.

without deciding the main question, it was agreed that nine additional volunteer regiments to serve during the war should be called from the states.[1]

Some weeks before this time Marcy and Mason, the Secretaries of War and the Navy, had talked over with Scott the question of the conduct of the war and the possibilities of the proposed expedition to Vera Cruz; and on October 27 Scott had submitted to the Secretary of War a memorandum entitled "Vera Cruz and its castle," in in which he expressed the opinion that the possession of Vera Cruz and the castle of Ulúa was "not likely to be worth one-tenth of the lives, time, and money, which their capture would cost us," unless, indeed, it was intended to open a new line of operations against the city of Mexico. He was now persuaded, he said, that the city of Mexico must be taken, or at least placed in imminent danger of capture, and this must be mainly through the city of Vera Cruz. He believed that the castle could not be taken without heavy loss of life and waste of time, and it would therefore be preferable to capture the city first and then proceed against the castle.

As to the means required, he began with the proposition that the people of Mexico seemed to present this dilemma to the United States: "If you come with few, we will overwhelm you; if with many, you will overwhelm yourselves." This he thought was particularly true of the line of operations through Saltillo and San Luis Potosí, where a large army could not be subsisted. The danger by way of Vera Cruz lay, in his judgment, principally in the approach of the yellow-fever season in the spring; and he therefore thought that an expedition should be set on foot early in the year, which should consist of at least ten thousand men, leaving Taylor at Monterey with what Scott called a "threatening force."[2]

[1] The call was issued Nov. 16, 1846. The form of the requisition addressed to the governors of the several states called upon—Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—is printed in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 479, 480.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1268–1270.

A fortnight later Scott submitted a new memorandum on the prosecution of the war, further urging the importance of a descent on Vera Cruz in order "to open a new and better line of operations upon the enemy's capital," for which he considered that an army of more than twenty thousand men might be ultimately necessary. He estimated Taylor's force, including the troops under the immediate command of General Wool, at about sixty-five hundred regulars and thirteen thousand five hundred volunteers; and he suggested leaving with Taylor twenty-five hundred regulars and eight thousand five hundred volunteers, or eleven thousand in all.

"With this force," he wrote, "all necessary garrisons in the rear may be kept up, and a column held at Monterey capable of advancing on the line of Saltillo and San Luis de Potosi, or of detaining in its front a large portion, or twice the number of the Mexican forces. It is certain that a garrison of Americans at Monterey, of four, or even three thousand men, would be able to defend it against a Mexican army of three or four times the number. But the movable column at that point, out of a total of 11,000 might be carried up to at least 8,000. This it may be assumed, would be fully sufficient to threaten and probably take Saltillo, if not San Luis de Potosi, &c. &c., combined with the movement on the new line of operations from Vera Cruz. . . . To meet the double invasion, Mexico must either divide her forces and increase our chance of success on both lines, or double her forces on one, and leave the other comparatively open to our advance."

Scott added that the positive instructions of the American government as to the proper division of forces would be needed, "besides the presence on the theatre of war of the highest in army rank," who would be the proper officer to carry out the instructions of the government and "to direct the principal attacking column on and from Vera Cruz."[1] Four days later Scott submitted a third memorandum, showing that with the volunteers just called for there might be obtained fourteen thousand men for Vera Cruz, leaving thirteen thousand two hundred and fifty for Monterey.[2]

[1] *Ibid.*, 1270–1273 (memorandum of Nov. 12, 1846).
[2] *Ibid.*, 1273 (memorandum of Nov. 16, 1846).

Evidently Marcy was much impressed with Scott's suggestions, and again brought up for discussion in the cabinet the question of appointing a general-in-chief to command the army in the field. It was generally agreed that Taylor was unfit and that Patterson had not sufficient experience. Scott, it was feared, would have no sympathy with the administration in carrying out its plans; but at last, after much discussion, Buchanan, Walker, Marcy, and Mason all expressed the opinion that "as he was the highest officer in command in the army he should be intrusted with the conduct of this important expedition." Cave Johnson, the Postmaster-General, and Clifford, the Attorney-General,[1] were more or less opposed to employing Scott. Polk himself said that "nothing but stern necessity and a sense of public duty" could induce him to place Scott at the head of so important an expedition as that contemplated to the Gulf coast of Mexico, but he did not see how it could well be avoided. If he had the power to select the general, he would select Benton. Once more the President talked with Marcy and Benton, and finally was brought to the reluctant decision to put Scott in command of the Vera Cruz expedition. On the day following this conversation—Thursday, November 19—Scott was therefore sent for to the White House and had a long conversation with the President, in the course of which he was offered and accepted the command of an expedition to Vera Cruz.

"I then told him," the President noted, "that I had at the commencement of the War given him my confidence and had tendered him the command, but that circumstances had occurred to change my determination. I was willing that by-gones should be by-gones & that he should take the command. He expressed himself as being deeply grateful to me & said he would show me his gratitude by his conduct when he got to the field. He was so grateful & so much affected that he almost shed tears."[2]

[1] Nathan Clifford, of Maine, afterward a justice of the Supreme Court, was appointed Attorney-General in October, 1846, after Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire, had declined the place.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 241-245.

Scott's own account of this interview, written more than fifteen years afterward, represented the President as much more effusive.

"Every expression of kindness and confidence," he wrote, "was lavished upon me. Such was the warmth and emphasis of his professions, that he fully won my confidence. I gave him a cordial reciprocation of my personal sympathy and regard—being again and again assured that the country would be bankrupted and dishonored unless the war could be made plainly to march toward a successful conclusion, and that I only could give to it the necessary impetus and direction."[1]

The following week Scott left Washington, and before the end of November was on his way to the South. A few weeks later he was told that the President had asked Congress to create the grade of lieutenant-general in order to place Benton in command of the army. Scott recorded his opinion that there had never been a grosser abuse of human confidence, and that, instead of being a friend, the President of the United States was "an enemy more to be dreaded than Santa Anna and all his hosts."[2]

But before leaving Washington Scott prepared two more memoranda for Marcy—one a draft of instructions to be sent to himself and the second a discussion of Taylor's despatch of October 15. In the latter he wrote: "I suppose that the war must go forward, and not be allowed to degenerate into *a war like a peace*, which would be as bad, or worse, than *a peace like a war*, involving an indefinite period of time and waste of money." He therefore proposed to take five thousand regulars and six thousand volunteers from Taylor, although the latter might thereby be for a time reduced to a strictly defensive condition at Monterey. To the eleven thousand men thus to be detached from Taylor, he proposed to add four thousand volunteers of the new regiments, making fifteen thousand for the expedition to Vera Cruz; and to send subsequent recruits "to enable Major-General Taylor to resume offensive, or at least *threatening*,

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, 399. [2] *Ibid.*, 403.

movements from Monterey upon Saltillo, San Luis de Potosi, &c., pending the expedition against Vera Cruz."[1]

It was on November 24 that Scott went to New York, and on the following day he wrote in high spirits to Taylor explaining that he intended to go south and to be at Camargo by about the twenty-third of December.

"But, my dear general," he wrote, "I shall be obliged to take from you most of the gallant officers and men (regulars and volunteers) whom you have so long and so nobly commanded. I am afraid that I shall, by imperious necessity—the approach of yellow fever on the gulf coast—reduce you, for a time, to stand on the defensive. This will be infinitely painful to you, and for that reason distressing to me. But I rely upon your patriotism to submit to the temporary sacrifice with cheerfulness. No man can better afford to do so."[2]

On the same day the Secretary of War was also writing to Taylor. The receipt of Taylor's despatch of October 15 was acknowledged, and it was said that the information therein contained confirmed the government in the belief that operations could not be extended as far as San Luis Potosí. If, therefore, no effort was to be made to occupy any place in advance of Monterey or Saltillo, a sufficient force could be detached by Taylor to enable the making of a successful attack upon the most important points on the coast, and it had now become evident that a larger force than the government had at first anticipated would be required for such an expedition. For that reason the President had decided to send General Scott to the seat of war.[3]

This letter from the War Department was crossed by one from Taylor, written at Monterey, in which he discussed rather more fully and more clearly than before his views as to the proper strategy for the troops under his command. The line which he considered should be held, extended from Parras, through Saltillo and Monterey, to Tampico. Referring to the map Taylor said:

[1] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1274–1277. Italics in original.
[2] Scott to Taylor, Nov. 25, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 373.
[3] Marcy to Taylor, Nov. 25, 1846; *ibid.*, 369 *et seq.*

"It will be seen at once, that San Luis Potosi is a position almost equally distant from the points of this line. This would give a force at San Luis a very great advantage over us, were it not for the nature of the country and the communications—the region between San Luis and the mountains being scantily supplied with water and subsistence, and the road by Saltillo and Monterey being the only practicable route for artillery across the mountains. Without artillery, the Mexican troops are not at all formidable, and, I think, have but little confidence in themselves. I therefore consider the positions of Saltillo and Parras as of prime importance. With an intermediate post at Patos, and the means, by a good road, of rapidly uniting, if necessary, I deem the columns of Brigadiers General Wool and Worth quite equal to hold that flank of the line. I shall, however, reinforce the latter general, particularly in cavalry and shall establish a reserve at this place (Monterey) to support the advanced positions, should the movements of the enemy require it.

"Brigadier General Wool is understood to be now at Parras with his column—say 2,400 strong, with six guns. Brigadier General Worth has his headquarters at Saltillo, his command consisting of some 1,200 regular troops, with eight guns. I propose to reinforce him by two regiments of volunteer foot, and a portion of the Kentucky cavalry. . . .

"At Monterey will be the headquarters of Major General Butler commanding the reserve. . . .

"Tampico is now garrisoned by eight strong companies of artillery and the Alabama regiment of volunteers—say 1,000 effectives. I consider this force quite sufficient to hold the place, controlling, as we do, the harbor. Between Tampico and this place, Victoria offers itself at once as an important position to be held by us. It is the capital of the state of Tamaulipas; it is situated at the debouchée of a pass through the mountains, and it has a port, *Soto la Marina*, where we shall probably be able to establish a convenient depot. It also threatens the flank of the Mexican army, should it advance from San Luis. . . . I have, therefore, changed nothing in my original purpose of moving on Victoria, believing it important to occupy that point, and knowing that any surplus force would then be in position for the ulterior views of the government, should any further operations on the gulf coast be ordered. Major General Patterson has accordingly been instructed to march from Matamoras on Victoria with three regiments of volunteers from his division, one being the Tennessee horse. I propose to move from this point, say by the 12th instant, with the regular troops now here under Brigadier General Twiggs (except those to be left in garrisons, as above), and the regiments of General Patterson's division under Brigadier General Quitman. At Montemorelos, 68 miles from this, I shall effect a junction with Riley, who is now there, and incorporate with the column the second Tennessee regiment under

orders for that place. With this augmented force I expect to effect a junction with Major General Patterson before Victoria.

"After establishing a depot, if it be found practicable, at Soto la Marina, examining the passes of the mountains, and making such dispositions as may be found necessary for the security of the position, it is my intention, unless otherwise instructed, to return with a portion of the regular force, and establish my head-quarters in advance of Saltillo, which, after all, I consider to be our most important point."[1]

What Taylor now proposed was, therefore, the establishment of a defensive line, extending from Parras through Saltillo, Monterey, Victoria, and Tampico—a line nearly five hundred miles in length—which was to be controlled by the possession of four or five isolated posts, none of which were nearer to each other than about seventy miles. The right of this line at Saltillo and Parras was clearly exposed to attack by the full force of the Mexican army, but Taylor expected to hold it with less than four thousand men.

The military weakness of such a position seemed obvious to observers at a distance. When the despatch just quoted was read in Washington the President noted his fears and dissatisfaction.

"It appears that Gen'l Taylor has paid no regard to the views of the Government, but has dispersed the troops in small bodies at different and distant points from each other, so that great apprehensions are entertained that they are so exposed that some portion of them may be cut off by the superior numbers of the enemy. It is manifest that Gen'l Taylor is wholly incompetent for so large a command. He seems to have no mind or powers of combination. . . . Gen'l Taylor, by dispersing his forces into small bodies, has acted directly against the views of the Government and contrary to his own views as communicated to the Government, that he could not advance beyond Monterey with safety."[2]

Taylor, nevertheless, had no misgivings, and on the twelfth of December started with his troops upon the march to Victoria;[3] but he had hardly been gone forty-eight hours

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Dec. 8, 1846; *ibid.*, 379–381.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 307 (Jan. 5, 1847). Polk seems to have confused Monterey with Saltillo. See also Marcy to Scott, Jan. 4, 1847, directing that Taylor's troops be concentrated at Monterey; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 871.

[3] See the formal orders for the march, *ibid.*, 513 *et seq.*

from Monterey, when he was overtaken at the village of Montemorelos by a despatch from General Worth. Worth stated that he had received intelligence to the effect that Santa Anna "designed to take advantage of the diversion of force toward Victoria, and by a rapid movement to strike a heavy blow at Saltillo, and, if successful, then at General Wool's force at Parras." Worth's intelligence was incorrect. Santa Anna was not yet in any condition to move from San Luis Potosí, and Worth's belief in the rumored advance was based partly on erroneous reports of the movement of some of the Mexican cavalry at outlying posts, and partly on his soldier-like apprehension of what a vigilant and active enemy might do.

Worth's first impulse was of course to concentrate at Saltillo. Besides writing to Taylor, information was also sent to Wool at Parras and to Butler at Monterey of the exposed position of Worth's small force, and both, immediately on the receipt of Worth's despatches, sent reinforcements to his aid. Butler went forward with two regiments of volunteers, leaving a small force to garrison Monterey. Wool, who held an isolated position at Parras, was, however, unable to march directly to Saltillo—the direct road being impracticable for wagons and artillery. The only means of communication between them was by passing through the hacienda of La Encantada, a point some ten miles from Saltillo on the direct road to San Luis. Saltillo, La Encantada, and Parras were thus situated at the apexes of a triangle, one side of which was impassable for an army. It was apparent, therefore, that if the Mexicans could seize and hold La Encantada at the southern apex of the triangle, Wool and Worth would be effectually isolated and could be dealt with in detail; and Wool accordingly broke up his camp at Parras, and pushing his artillery and cavalry at the rate of forty miles a day, arrived at La Encantada on December 21. By the time he got there, Major-General Butler had arrived at Saltillo and by virtue of his rank took command of the entire combined forces of Worth and Wool.

Taylor himself had reached Monterey and was actually

on his way thence to Saltillo, when he was met, on the twentieth of December, by a despatch announcing the concentration of Butler's entire force, and that the movement of the Mexicans had not taken place. It was indeed reported that their advanced posts had rather been withdrawn, and Taylor, therefore, at once retraced his steps toward Victoria with General Twiggs's brigade of regulars, who had accompanied him in his marching backward and forward. Quitman's brigade of volunteers had meanwhile occupied Victoria on December 29 without resistance. Taylor, with Twiggs and his brigade, arrived there on January 4, and Patterson with the volunteers from Matamoros also came up on the same day. The force thus collected was over five thousand strong and, as Taylor reported, in excellent health and in good condition for service.[1]

But within ten days from the date of the concentration at Victoria Taylor found that the state of his supplies would make it necessary for him to move his command. The place was practically not tenable, and therefore on January 14 the regulars, under Twiggs, started upon their march toward Tampico. They were followed on the succeeding days by Patterson's volunteers, it being expected that the whole force, numbering four thousand seven hundred and thirty-three men, would reach their destination by the twenty-fifth. Taylor himself retained May's squadron of cavalry and the Mississippi regiment of volunteers, "partly as escort to headquarters, and partly to guard a train of supplies just arrived from Matamoros, and which I deem it unnecessary to send forward to Tampico. No troops will be left in garrison here," *i. e.*, at Victoria.[2]

Taylor's "defensive line" along the Sierra Madre was thus given up. Tampico, at one end of the line, was occupied. North and west of that there were no American garrisons, except at Saltillo and Monterey, with their depots at Camargo and the lower course of the Rio Grande; but though Taylor still held Saltillo, General Scott and the

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Jan. 7, 1847; *ibid.*, 888.
[2] Taylor to Scott, Jan. 15, 1847; *ibid.*, 861.

administration had some time before decided that it should be abandoned and that Taylor should only occupy a strictly defensive position at Monterey.

Nearly a month before Taylor gave up the idea of holding Victoria, Scott had written from New Orleans explaining in some detail his plans for the expedition to Vera Cruz, which was to open "a new and shorter line of operations on the capital." The first great difficulty was to get together, in time and afloat, off the Brazos de Santiago, a sufficient force to give a reasonable prospect of success before the yellow-fever season. Fifteen thousand men were desirable, if not necessary; but he would go forward if he could assemble five thousand regulars and three thousand volunteers.

"To make up the force for the new expedition," he continued, "I foresee that I shall . . . be obliged to reduce you to the defensive at the moment when it would be of the greatest importance to the success of my expedition that you should be in strength to manœuvre offensively upon San Luis de Potosi, &c. . . . Including the regulars and volunteers at Tampico, or on their way thither, I may now say that I shall want from you, say Worth's division of regulars, made up to 4000 men; two field batteries, say Duncan's and Taylor's, and 500 regular cavalry; besides 500 volunteer cavalry, and as many volunteer foot as you can possibly spare—leaving you a sufficient force to defend Monterey and maintain your communications with Camargo."[1]

Scott reached the mouth of the Rio Grande about the end of December and tried in vain to arrange an interview with Taylor; but the latter was so briskly moving backward and forward between Saltillo, Monterey, and Victoria that no meeting was had. Scott therefore wrote from Camargo, giving further details as to the movements of troops, expressing a hope that toward April such reinforcements might be received as would enable Taylor to advance and effect a junction with the troops from Vera Cruz, and saying that till then "the strict defensive" was the only course. At the same time Scott sent definite orders direct to General Butler for the movements of Worth's division and the rest of the troops which were to be withdrawn.[2]

[1] Scott to Taylor, Dec. 20, 1846; *ibid.*, 839.

[2] Same to same, and Scott to Butler, Jan. 3, 1847; *ibid.*, 848, 851–853.

While Scott on the Rio Grande was making these arrangements, the Secretary of War, in Washington, was writing to him expressing anxiety in regard to Taylor's position. There were too many posts in the long line occupied by his army which might be separately attacked.

"While engaged in an expedition on the seacoast, it is not proposed to penetrate the country beyond Monterey, with a view to its permanent occupation, though it is desirable to maintain a threatening attitude at that point. Monterey must be held with a sufficient force."[1]

Scott concurred in the Secretary's suggestion as to Saltillo, and immediately on receiving the despatch just quoted he wrote to Taylor ordering him to fall back to Monterey.

"I hope," he wrote, "I have left, or shall leave you, including the new volunteers who will soon be up, a competent force to defend the head of your line (Monterey) and its communications with the depots in the neighborhood. To enable you to do this more certainly, I must ask you to abandon Saltillo, and to make no detachments, except for *reconnoisances* and immediate defence, much beyond Monterey. I know this to be the wish of the government, founded on reasons in which I concur; among them, that the enemy intends to operate against small detachments and posts."[2]

Here, then, was at last the definitive plan of campaign. Tampico, with a small garrison, was to be held. Saltillo was to be abandoned. Taylor's entire remaining force was to be concentrated in Monterey, with only such detachments as might be needed to keep open his communications by way of Camargo and the mouth of the Rio Grande. And Scott, at the head of all the troops that could be collected, was to seize Vera Cruz, and thence—following the line of march pursued by Cortés—to endeavor to strike a decisive blow upon the capital of Mexico.

[1] Marcy to Scott, Jan. 4, 1847; *ibid.*, 389.
[2] Scott to Taylor, Jan. 26, 1847; *ibid.*, 864.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### ANTI-CLERICALISM AND ANTI-SLAVERY

THE authorities in Mexico, unlike those in the United States, gave themselves very little concern about plans of campaign. The problems with which they had to deal were far more fundamental, for they were problems involving the bare existence of an army. It had only been by dint of great exertions that a few thousand men could be assembled at Monterey; and it became daily more and more difficult to equip or subsist a force of any respectable size. The difficulty resolved itself, of course, into a lack of money; and how money was to be raised for the army was, in the last analysis, the problem set before the Mexican government. There was but one mine in Mexico, said a Mexican historian, from which money could be extracted, and that was the property of the church, which few dared to lay hands on. Santa Anna, who had always professed the utmost piety, was most unwilling to come forward as the author of a plan for seizing the patrimony of the church; and for months he seems to have been engaged in trying to devise some scheme by which money could be raised from this source without his being put forward as the author.

For some time after his arrival at Vera Cruz, in August, he refused to show himself in the capital, although urged to do so by Salas and the rest of the temporary government. The reason which he alleged for staying away was that he feared his enemies might accuse him of having taken advantage of the revolution of August 4, 1846, to reinstate himself in the presidential chair; and he declared that his sole ambition was to be the instrument for repelling the piratical invasion of the Americans. Nevertheless, on September

14, having allowed himself to be persuaded, he arrived at the city of Mexico, where he was received with great popular rejoicing and a number of speeches at the palace; but he refused to accept a dinner which was to be given in his honor, and took up his residence outside the city at the Archbishop's Palace at Tacubaya.

Persisting firmly in his refusal to accept the responsibilities of the government, Santa Anna declared that he would only remain at the capital long enough to secure supplies for a campaign. He also announced that he did not mean to leave a single soldier in the city, as he meant to concentrate his whole force at San Luis Potosí, and that he would insist on the government's providing three hundred thousand dollars a month for the support of the army. But while he professed entire detachment from politics, his chief occupation at Tacubaya, according to the general belief in Mexico, was the carrying on of intrigues with the various factions and the encouragement of hostility between them. His object, it was said, was to push the radical party—the *exaltados*—to such an extreme that he would be called upon by the public generally to take over the government as a saviour of society. Salas, who was still acting as President *ad interim*, was a notoriously weak figure-head, and Santa Anna's design was to push forward Farias, the typical representative of the radical party and the old enemy of the church.

The first step was to establish a "council of government," with Farias at its head, which was done by a decree issued by General Salas on September 20, 1846.[1] The next step was to use Farias as a cat's-paw to extract from the church the money needed for the support of the army.

It would obviously have been too dangerous a policy to attempt to lay hands at once upon the church's property, and the government therefore devoted itself ostentatiously to efforts to raise the money elsewhere. Appeals were made to the patriotism of the nation, and these appeals actually brought out some substantial contributions, as the news of

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 171.

Taylor's march from the Rio Grande to Monterey came in good season to inflame the patriotism of those who had money to give. Santa Anna himself encouraged the movement by declaring that he personally would advance money for the support of the army. But the total result of these appeals was, of course, absurdly inadequate to setting an army in the field, although money enough was actually raised to enable Santa Anna to march out from the capital on the twenty-eighth of September at the head of two brigades, for the relief, as he stated, of Monterey. Monterey had fallen three days before.

On August 29, the day after Santa Anna left the capital, the official newspaper published a full account of the pious and public visit of the commanding general to the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, whither he had gone, like Dunois *partant pour la Syrie*, to invoke the protection of the sacred image in the campaign he was about to undertake. From this incident the newspaper deduced the moral that the clergy ought to pay for the army as well as pray for it.

"The American army," said the *Diario*, "is made up of adventurers who have no country, no political or religious creed, no moral principles or sentiments; for whom there are no priests or magistrates, and for whom the house of God, the Senate, a drawing-room, a theatre and a circus, are all the same. For this reason we think that the ministers of the altar, being specially interested in the present war for the preservation of our adorable religion, instead of incessantly directing their prayers to the Almighty, ought also to unite with other citizens in contributing of their wealth to aid the government in the present critical circumstances." [1]

On the second of October, four days after the Virgin of Guadalupe had been invoked, the news of the capitulation of Monterey reached the capital. On the same day General Salas issued a decree which had evidently been prepared for use some time beforehand. It began by reciting at great length that the existing war with the United States was for the Mexican nation a question of life or death; that

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 591.

many individuals had offered generous sums for the support of the war, but these sums had proved insufficient; that the war ought not to be permitted to languish for want of money, lest the men of that generation should become the object of the curses of posterity and the scorn of other nations and of history; and that sacrifices must therefore be exacted from all citizens. Owners of real estate were therefore required to pay the government a sum equal to one month's rent for their lands, while those who occupied their own houses and lands, including convents and schools, were also to pay such a sum as might be assessed as the equivalent of a month's rent. Tenants were to pay a sum equivalent to a quarter of a month's rent of the premises they occupied, unless their rental was less than a dollar a month. The proceeds of this tax were to be deposited in a special safe with three keys, one to be held by the President of the republic, another by the Secretary of the Treasury, and the third by the chief alcalde of the city of Mexico, so that no money could be drawn except for the necessary expenses of the war— a curiously primitive method of securing financial responsibility. There was also to be a national lottery on a large scale.[1]

The decree did not, however, provide any means of enforcing payment of the amounts thus levied, so that nobody obeyed it, and it was generally ridiculed and assailed in the public press. It was, however, to some extent the cause of serious riots in the capital between the fourteenth and eighteenth of October, 1846, although it was also said that private letters from Santa Anna, published in the newspapers, in which he expressed his opinion in regard to the conduct of General Salas, had contributed to these disturbances. These riots, whatever their cause, were quickly put down.

Santa Anna, with the garrison of the city of Mexico, arrived at San Luis Potosí on the eighth of October. A few days before, Ampudia, with the whole of the former garrison of Monterey, had started south from Saltillo, and after a

[1] Decree of Oct. 2, 1846; *ibid.*, 172.

fortnight's march they arrived at San Luis. His abandonment of Saltillo was by Santa Anna's orders; but why he should have been ordered to evacuate that important point it is difficult to understand. The movement has been severely criticised by Mexican writers.

At the same time Santa Anna gave orders for the immediate evacuation of Tampico, which was garrisoned by about four thousand men, and orders were sent to all the neighboring states of Mexico to forward reinforcements to San Luis. Works of defence were thrown up about that city, and the troops whom Santa Anna had already collected, together with the reinforcements as they arrived, were organized and occasionally drilled, in preparation for a forward movement.

"The infantry," wrote an officer, "was exercised by brigades under the command of the respective generals; but I never saw any general manœuvres even by divisions. The cavalry was drilled only by regiments. The artillery hardly ever manœuvred, and never fired a blank shot. The general in command was never present on the field of manœuvres, so that he was unable to appreciate the respective qualities of the various bodies under his command. On Sundays the troops went to mass, marched through the city and returned to their quarters. If any meetings of the principal commanding officers were held to discuss the operations of the campaign, it was not known nor was it known whether any plan of campaign had been formed. In none of the corps were there schools of officers as there should have been." [1]

The reinforcements which arrived, principally from the states of Guanajuato and Jalisco, were badly armed, badly clothed, and completely ignorant of their duties. Many of the soldiers, says the author just cited, went into battle without ever having fired off a musket. But Santa Anna, with his accustomed energy and activity, succeeded in collecting a large body of troops who, if not very efficient, were at least capable of making long marches and of sustaining patiently great fatigues.

By the middle of November the moderate sums of money which had been contributed for the army were nearly ex-

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 55.

hausted, and the plan embodied in the decree of October 2, 1846—which really consisted in requesting the inhabitants of the nation to contribute voluntarily the equivalent of a month's rent—having proved a failure, the ingenious minds of the authorities in Mexico hit upon another and more complicated expedient.

A decree was issued on November 19, 1846, which recited the necessity for raising money, in view of the approach of the day upon which a battle would take place on whose result would perhaps depend the very existence of the republic; that the efforts of the people and of the army would be useless if the necessary money was not forthcoming; that the government had exhausted all ordinary and extraordinary means and all mild and temperate measures (*medios suaves y templados*); that the venerable clergy throughout the whole republic, and especially in the metropolitan diocese, had constantly expressed itself as ready to contribute from its property for the sacred purpose of saving the nation; and that it could not be doubted that private individuals were animated by the same spirit. It was therefore decreed that drafts should be drawn by the government upon the clergy throughout the country, payable, with interest, in two years from date, which drafts the ecclesiastical authorities of each bishopric must accept within three days after sight. It was, of course, also a necessary part of the scheme to get these drafts promptly discounted, and the decree, therefore, further provided that certain persons who were to be designated in each locality were to purchase these drafts at par within eight days after demand. The total amounts of the drafts were to be two million dollars.[1]

Before the efficacy of this measure could be fully tested, the Mexican Congress met and was opened in the usual form by General Salas on Sunday, December 6, 1846. His speech

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 211–218. The sum of $800,000 was to be raised in the Federal District (city of Mexico and suburbs), and a list of the individuals who were to be assessed in sums varying from $20,000 to $200 apiece is annexed to the decree. Similar lists, of course, were to be prepared in each bishopric by the authorities of the locality.

set forth the causes and effects of the revolution of the previous August, gave an account of the acts of the government during the four months that had since elapsed, announced that the national army had been concentrated and organized at San Luis Potosí and numbered twenty-three thousand men, and that it was hoped they would soon meet the American forces, which were advancing toward the interior of the republic under General Taylor. The national triumph, he added, would be a certainty, provided the new representatives of the people should fortify the federal system and democratic principles, and provided also they devoted themselves to the task of bringing the nation out of the chaos and absolute disorder in which it had been involved as the result of perpetual revolutions.

The first measure which the temporary government urged upon Congress was necessarily that of dealing with the financial situation, for that, in the then condition of Mexico, dominated everything else. Almonte, who had become Secretary of the Treasury, proposed the imposition of an extraordinary tax upon each of the states and territories, payable monthly, in addition to an immediate payment aggregating six hundred thousand dollars. Congress, however, received the suggestion without enthusiasm, and it adopted a reply to his proposal, expressing surprise that Congress should be thus called upon—immediately after the organization of the two houses, and before any account had been rendered of the condition of the Treasury and the expenditure of the money already collected—to furnish additional supplies for the campaign.

"The government," said the reply of Congress, "in the four months of its existence, during which it has exercised absolute power, was under the strictest obligation to provide means—not only for the term of its own existence, but also for such a period as might elapse before the representatives of the country could establish new taxes and make them effective. . . . Before loading the people, already oppressed by taxes, including that which is most onerous—the tax of their blood—it is necessary to know how much is needed in order to sustain the war for a year. Congress should not pursue a system of only acting from day to day."

The reply concluded by demanding information of the receipts of the government and a budget of expenses, in order that Congress might act with full knowledge.[1]

Having delivered this rebuke to the government of Salas, Congress next proceeded to the election of a President and Vice-President of the republic. Santa Anna, by a small majority of the states (eleven to nine), was elected President over Don Francisco Eloriaga.[2] His old associate, Gómez Farias, was chosen Vice-President, to the annoyance and alarm of the conservative elements of society, especially the clergy.

In accepting his election, Santa Anna in a high-flown letter repeated his declaration that he had not returned from exile for the purpose of obtaining the presidency, but only "to combat the daring foreigner who profanes with his presence the sacred territory of the fatherland." He asserted that he would accept the post simply because he wished to pay respect to the decision of the constituent Congress which represented the nation; that he purposed to carry on the military operations with which he had been charged, and which, under divine favor, would result in conquering a glorious peace; and that when this was accomplished he intended to surrender the office of President and retire into private life. He did not, however, then take the oath of office.

Gómez Farias, being thus left to himself by Santa Anna, was now in readiness to raise money by means of the seizure of ecclesiastical property, a course to which his thoughts naturally inclined. His first step was to cause an inspired article to be published in the *Diario Oficial* of December 31, in which, after insisting upon the necessity of obtaining abundant means for carrying on the government, and after referring to Almonte's proposed special tax upon the states, attention was called to the propriety of contributions by the church. The measure proposed in the decree of November 19 for raising money by means of drafts drawn

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 600.
[2] Decree of Dec. 23, 1846; Dublan y Lozano, V, 238.

upon the clergy, it was said, had proved a melancholy failure. Every possible means had been taken by the ecclesiastical authorities to postpone a definite settlement of the affair, but it was to be regretted that the patriotism of the venerable clergy had not been exhibited on this occasion, and the bishops were therefore now urged to make some sacrifice for the country, in view of the great dangers which threatened "our religion, our independence, and our liberty."

This very broad hint produced no results, and the government within the week proposed to Congress the forcible seizure of the endowments of the church. The proposal, as was to be expected, was bitterly resisted; but the necessities of the country were so obvious, and the government of the day was so strong, that after a continuous session of nearly three days and three nights—lasting from the seventh of January, 1847, until the morning of the tenth of that month—a bill was passed authorizing the government to raise fifteen million dollars by mortgage or sale of church property for the purpose of carrying on the war with the United States. It was approved by Farias, and became a law on the eleventh of January.

This statute, in the most general terms, authorized the government to seize any church endowments at any time during the continuance of the war, but with certain exceptions. The property excepted was that used for the support of hospitals, almshouses, schools, and other similar institutions; benefices created by gift, in which the right of nomination resided in individuals; the sacred vessels, vestments, and other objects indispensable for worship; and the property of nunneries to an amount equal to six thousand dollars for each of the nuns. The proceeds of seizures were not to be applied to any other object than that of carrying on the war, and one million dollars out of the fifteen must be expended in the purchase of arms, one-half of which were to be given to the frontier states and the balance to the other states.[1]

Instantly upon the passage of this law the chapter of the

[1] Law of Jan. 11, 1847; *Ibid.*, 246-252.

Cathedral of Mexico issued a formal protest, in which they set forth that it was impossible for any one to comply with it without incurring the censures and ecclesiastical penalties pronounced by the Council of Trent against those, of whatever rank or dignity, who should despoil, or consent to despoiling, the property of the church.[1]

This protest produced the expected result. The persons whose duty it was to publish or execute the law refused to do so. But there were men of a younger generation who were quite prepared to assume the responsibility of supporting the views of Farias and his cabinet, and of opposing the whole power of the church; and one of these was the third deputy alcalde of the city of Mexico, Don Juan José Baz, who said that he would publish the decree, and would for that purpose take charge *ad interim* of the government of the Federal District. He did so, and the decree was published at noon on Wednesday, January 13, 1847. The step was followed by some attempts at rioting in the city, which were apparently incited by the clergy of the Cathedral. At noon on Thursday, January 14, people ran about the streets shouting: "Long live religion!" "Down with the government!" The shops, as usual on such occasions, were instantly closed, and there was general apprehension of serious trouble; but the affair went no further at that time.

Next day it was found that the doors of the Cathedral had been closed and were being kept closed, and it was

[1] Protest of January 11, 1847, at twelve o'clock noon. The edict referred to is in Sess. XXII, c. XI, *Bonorum Cuiuscunque ecclesias aut pii loci occupatores puniuntur*. The essential parts of it may be thus translated: "If any cleric or layman, by whatsoever dignity pre-eminent, be he even emperor or king, should be so possessed by covetousness as to presume to convert to his own use the jurisdictions, property, rents and rights, including those held in fee or under lease, the fruits, emoluments, or any sources of revenue whatsoever belonging to any church, or to any benefice, whether secular or regular, which ought to be employed for the necessities of the ministers thereof or of the poor; he shall lie under an anathema until he shall have made full restitution to the church, and until he shall, furthermore, have obtained absolution from the Roman Pontiff. And the cleric who shall be the author of, or consenting to, any execrable fraud and usurpation of this kind, shall be subjected to the same penalties; as also he shall be deprived of all benefices whatsoever, and be rendered incapable of any others." The phrase *anathema subiaceat* is the regular formula of excommunication.

rumored that they would not be reopened for an indefinite period. A note in a very peremptory tone was thereupon addressed by the government to the authorities of the Cathedral, stating that the government had been given to understand that the chapter was exciting the people to rebellion by issuing disrespectful protests and by closing the Cathedral; and that if the Cathedral was not opened at the customary hours, and if public tranquillity was disturbed, the government would find itself compelled to take repressive measures which would be as severe and as efficacious as circumstances might demand. The Cathedral was opened.

On the following day the government made preparations to take possession at once of ten million dollars' worth of church property in the bishoprics of Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara, Michoacan, Oaxaca, and Durango, deferring the raising of the additional five millions from property in the provinces, until further information could be obtained.[1] But though it was easy for the government to issue decrees for seizing the property, it was difficult to take actual possession; for many of those who were appointed commissioners to effect the seizure declined, under one pretext or another, to serve.

While the government was thus trying to get the law executed, new embarrassments arose from the attitude of Santa Anna. It was his urgency which had induced the government to adopt extreme measures. He had undoubtedly given Farias to understand that he would support a measure for seizing ecclesiastical endowments. He had written, immediately on receiving information of the passage of the law, that it would save the country, that it was eminently patriotic, that the representatives who had voted for it had deserved well of the country, that the news had been received by his troops with loud and enthusiastic cheers, and that the measure must be carried into effect with exactness and promptitude. But when Santa Anna learned of the violence of the clerical opposition he wrote again, on January 26, from San Luis Potosí, that he was

[1] Decree of Jan. 15, 1847; Dublan y Lozano, V, 248.

informed the law had produced no result except an almost universal discontent. He was also informed, he said, that he himself was regarded as the author of the measure—this belief in his authorship being based upon certain private letters which had been published. He expressed strong objections to such a publication of his private letters, and protested that the ideas which he might put forth in this manner were not to be regarded as final decisions and that his name should not have been used in passing the act. The result, as he chose to regard it, was that his "unwearied enemies" were now asserting that the act had been drawn up at his suggestion, and that it was to be enforced simply because it had received his approval. He therefore begged that Congress would modify the law if any other means could be found for raising the money. He also took occasion to point out one other source of revenue, by stating that he had just seized ninety-eight bars of silver from the mines, most of which belonged to Spanish merchants.[1]

This protest of Santa Anna encouraged the clerical party to renew the discussion in Congress. The first result of their efforts was the passage of another law, on February 4, 1847, which gave the government "extraordinary powers" to raise forthwith five million dollars for use in the defence of the national territory. The act, however, declared that this was not to be construed as giving the government power to exact forced loans, or to relax the "prohibitive" laws, or to seize the property of private individuals, or to execute any contract of colonization. The government was also prohibited from alienating, in whole or in part, national territory and from disposing of any property exempted from the operation of the law of January 11, 1847.[2] These exceptions seemed to make the law ineffectual, for it was hard to understand from what sources the government could raise money, even by the most "extraordinary powers," when no one was willing to make loans, and when the seizure of private property and the alienation of land belonging to the nation were alike prohibited. In fact, the law of Feb-

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, V, 607. [2] Dublan y Lozano, V, 255.

ruary 4 seems to have been intended as a partial repeal or suspension of the law of January 11 which authorized the seizure of church property.

At the same time there was vehement discussion, both in the press and in Congress, as to the power of the secular government to interfere at all with the property of the church, either under the Constitution of 1824 or under general legal and religious principles affecting the relations of church and state. Basing their action upon such arguments, which were set out in voluminous clerical pamphlets, the ecclesiastical corporations in the city of Mexico refused to surrender their title-deeds to the government or to give any information in regard to their investments. The government thereupon seized all the property of the church, without regard to whether its income was devoted to hospitals and schools or to other purposes, claiming that without information from the church authorities it was impossible to make proper classifications.[1]

This energetic action was met by an effort of the clerical party to drive Farias from power. An effort was even made in Congress to pass an act declaring him "incapable of governing," precisely as had been done eighteen years before in the case of President Guerrero. This measure, however, failed of passage, and the moderate and clerical parties thereupon proposed to Farias to support him, but only on condition that he would allow them to organize a new ministry and would agree to support whatever measures a majority of Congress might approve. Farias, however, was quite devoid of personal ambition. His one object was to urge the country forward upon the path of reform—reform, in his language and the language of all Mexican radicals, meaning such a change in the relations of church and state as would render the former in every way subordinate to the latter.

The obstinacy of Farias in adhering to his plans was much

[1] A collection of documents, pamphlets, and newspaper comments on this affair was published in the city of Mexico in 1847, under the title *Despojo de los Bienes Eclesiásticos; Apuntes Interesantes para la Historia de la Iglesia Mexicana*, from which most of the foregoing account is taken.

criticised. It was urged that the law of January 11 would prove quite ineffective; that the church property, if it was to yield anything at all, would have to be sold at an enormous sacrifice and with very little advantage to the nation or the army; and that some other and more practical measure ought to be adopted. But Farias was by no means inclined to compromises. An upright, conscientious, and narrow-minded fanatic, he was not willing to sacrifice principle for present expediency or to surrender a cause which he believed to be just. He was absolutely sincere and honest, and was quite ready to sacrifice himself if the cause of church reform, in which he believed with his whole strength, would thereby be advanced.

The month of February was thus spent in negotiations and discussions which had little result beyond embittering the relations of the clerical and anti-clerical parties, although the government, having taken possession of some property forming part of the church endowments, was doubtless in receipt of a certain amount of rents and interest on mortgages. But late in the month of February the crisis came to a head. Farias had been for some time apprehensive in regard to the national guard of the city of Mexico, which was composed in large part of men of good position and which was acting as garrison of the city in the absence of the regular troops. On February 25, 1847, orders were given by the government for the removal of one battalion of the national guard, which was quartered in the University buildings just across the street from the National Palace, to barracks at a distance from the centre of the city. Two days later an order was issued directing this battalion to march to the support of the troops defending Tuxpan and Vera Cruz.

The order for the troops of the national guard to leave the city of Mexico was the signal for an outbreak which had probably been long premeditated. The greater part of the garrison of Mexico instantly issued a pronunciamiento declaring that the legislative and executive authorities of the government were to be dismissed forthwith, as they no longer

deserved national confidence; that the Constitution of 1824 should remain in force; that until a new President and Vice-President were elected by the legislatures of the several states, the executive power should be exercised by the President of the Supreme Court with the aid of a provisional council to be appointed by that court; and that new deputies and senators were to be elected as soon as possible to form a Congress having constituent powers. The acts of January 11 and February 4, providing for the seizure of church property and the raising of five million dollars, were to be suspended. General Santa Anna was to be considered commander-in-chief of the Mexican army.[1]

A revolution on a small scale at once broke out. The national guards, subsidized by the clerical party, attacked the government; while the government was supported by a small remnant of the national guard which had remained faithful and by about eight hundred regulars who had arrived from Oaxaca on their way to join the army. Neither party was very vigorous, though both burned much powder. The government forces, indeed, stood principally on the defensive. The revolutionary forces, on the other hand, occupied church towers and other buildings in the neighborhood of the Palace, and the troops of both parties, sheltered behind solid stone-walls, fired ineffectually in all directions, with small loss to either of the contending parties, but with considerable damage to such of the innocent inhabitants as ventured to show themselves in the streets. Meanwhile, the great mass of the population of Mexico, as in the revolutions of 1839 and 1840, remained perfectly indifferent to the contest between their masters. Even the cry of religion and the harangues of the priests in the suburbs did not serve to interest the populace.

After some days of this sort of casual and unenthusiastic firing, the leaders of the revolution decided to change the ground of their opposition to the government. So much of their plan as contemplated doing away with Congress and the President was abandoned, and it was agreed that they

[1] See text of this document in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 631.

would limit themselves to the dismissal from office of Farias on the professed ground that he was irreligious. The demand for the repeal of the laws of January 11 and February 4 was also temporarily abandoned. Farias, meanwhile, says a friendly critic who was also an eye-witness of the events just described,

"discharged his duty with such dignity and courage as to win the admiration of his enemies themselves, and to acquire not a few friends and admirers. Farias, deprived of everything, contending, with a handful of men of the people against the most powerful and influential classes of society, struggling against Congress itself, and reduced to the last extremity, did not for a single moment belie his character, nor did he give the slightest indication of weakness. He faced the tempest that might break him, but which was utterly impotent to make him bend."[1]

Santa Anna, during all these commotions, had been absent with his army in northern Mexico and was out of the reach of communications with the capital. He had left San Luis Potosí on the second of February, and it was reported in the city of Mexico that he had fought a battle with the Americans near Saltillo on the twenty-second and twenty-third of the month. He had announced the result as a victory, but it was known that he and his men were returning southward; and his expected arrival was looked forward to by both parties in the confident expectation that he would find a way to put an end to the contest between clericals and anti-clericals—*polkos* and *puros*. The time had come for him to play the part of a saviour of society.

While the government of Mexico had thus been engaged in desperate and fruitless efforts to make adequate preparation for resisting the American invasion, the representatives of the American people had been busy in heated discussions over the policy of their own government, both with respect to the origin of the war and with respect to its future

[1] J. F. Ramírez to Francisco Elorriaga, April 2, 1847, in García, *Documentos Inéditos*, III, 201. In this long letter Ramírez, who had filled for a short time the post of Minister of Foreign Relations, and had exceptional means of information, set forth the history of the previous month in the city of Mexico.

conduct. The Mexican Congress had met on Sunday, December 6, 1846. The Congress at Washington met on Monday, December 7, 1846, in a thoroughly unamiable temper. A large proportion of the members had lost their seats.[1] The elections had gone against the administration, and public sentiment was expressing itself daily more and more clearly against a war which the North believed was being waged for the extension of slavery.

The President's message therefore showed him on the defensive before the country, and he thought it necessary to present a long apology for the administration, in what he called "a condensed review" of the injuries the United States had sustained from Mexico, of the causes which had led to the war, and of its progress since it was begun.

The United States, he asserted, had neither desired nor provoked the war. On the contrary, all honorable means had been resorted to to avert it, although "after years of endurance of aggravated and unredressed wrongs" there were ample causes of war and the United States might have appealed to the whole civilised world for the justice of her cause. Had these wrongs been resented and redressed in the first instance, the President believed that war might have been avoided, but one outrage having been permitted to pass with impunity encouraged the perpetration of another.

The President then recited the proceedings had in the administrations of Jackson and Van Buren, including the awards made by the umpire under the treaty of 1839 which were still partly unpaid; the signature of the convention of November 20, 1843, by which provision was made for ascertaining and paying other claims; its ratification by the American Senate with amendments; and the failure of Mexico to decide whether it would or would not accept the convention with these amendments.

"In so long suffering Mexico to violate her most solemn treaty obligations, plunder our citizens of their property, and imprison their

[1] Of 228 members of the House of Representatives in the thirtieth Congress, less than 100 had served in the twenty-ninth Congress.

persons without affording them any redress, we have failed to perform one of the first duties which every government owes to its citizens; and the consequence has been, that many of them have been reduced from a state of affluence to bankruptcy. The proud name of American citizen, which ought to protect all who bear it from insult and injury throughout the world, has afforded no such protection to our citizens in Mexico. We had ample cause of war against Mexico long before the breaking out of hostilities."

The President next discussed the annexation of Texas to the United States, which, he contended, constituted no just cause of offence to Mexico. Texas, he said, "constituted a portion of the ancient province of Louisiana," and the United States in Jefferson's time had vigorously asserted territorial rights extending as far as the Rio Grande. The claim of Mexico that the Nueces formed the western boundary had never been heard of then. "The Texas which was ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty of 1819, embraced all the country now claimed by the State of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande"; and a long argument was submitted, going over substantially the same ground as that already traversed by Donelson and Buchanan.

"But," the President continued, "Mexico herself has never placed the war which she has waged upon the ground that our army occupied the intermediate territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Her refuted pretension that Texas was not in fact an independent State, but a rebellious province, was obstinately persevered in; and her avowed purpose in commencing a war with the United States was to reconquer Texas, and to restore Mexican authority over the whole territory—not to the Nueces only, but to the Sabine. In view of the proclaimed menaces of Mexico to this effect, I deemed it my duty, as a measure of precaution and defence, to order our army to occupy a position on our frontier as a military post, from which our troops could best resist and repel any attempted invasion which Mexico might make."

The assertion that the United States had attempted to acquire Texas by force was then considered. The President reviewed the transactions of 1845, including the joint resolution of Congress to admit Texas to the Union and the mission of Slidell. So long, said the President, as

Paredes remained at the head of the government no hope could be cherished of preserving peace with Mexico; and under these circumstances it had been believed that any revolution in Mexico founded upon opposition to the ambitious projects of Paredes would tend to promote the cause of peace, as well as to prevent any attempted European interference in the affairs of the North American continent. For this reason the President had thought it wise not to obstruct the return of Santa Anna to Mexico.

"Our object was the restoration of peace; and, with that view, no reason was perceived why we should take part with Paredes, and aid him, by means of our blockade, in preventing the return of his rival to Mexico. On the contrary, it was believed that the intestine divisions which ordinary sagacity could not but anticipate as the fruit of Santa Anna's return to Mexico, and his contest with Paredes, might strongly tend to produce a disposition with both parties to restore and preserve peace with the United States."

The President congratulated the country upon the success of its military and naval operations and the energy and gallantry of both the regular and volunteer officers and soldiers. He asserted that the war had not been waged with a view to conquest, but that it would be vigorously prosecuted "with a view to obtain an honorable peace, and thereby secure ample indemnity for the expenses of the war, as well as to our much injured citizens, who hold large pecuniary demands against Mexico." He recommended again an appropriation of two million dollars to facilitate negotiations with Mexico, and an additional loan of twenty-three million dollars for the expenses of the war. Other measures, such as the imposition of duties upon tea and coffee, and an economy in making appropriations for all objects not indispensable, were suggested. Finally, he commended to the early and favorable consideration of Congress the measures proposed by the Secretary of War for filling up the numbers of the regular army, and for raising an additional force to serve during the war with Mexico.

Nothing was said in the message in regard to the future methods of conducting the war. Although the policy of

establishing and holding a defensive line had been strongly advocated, and although the President himself had at one time been disposed to adopt that view, nothing was said of this policy nor of the intention to land troops at Vera Cruz. Nor was anything further said as to the ultimate objects of the war in respect to acquiring Mexican territory. The President had indeed been inclined, in preparing his message, to make some definite statement on this subject.

"I had proposed," he noted in his diary, "in my draft to submit to Congress the propriety, at the same time that the war should be vigorously prosecuted, to establish a line of boundary securing to the United States a sufficient territory to afford indemnity for the expenses of the war, and to our citizens who hold pecuniary demands against Mexico."

But Benton had thought these passages should be omitted, and the President had submitted Benton's views to his cabinet. Buchanan and Walker thought the proposed passages were proper, while Mason "was strongly inclined" to concur with Benton. All agreed, however, that it was inexpedient to retain the passages, if for no other reason, because "if they were opposed by Col. Benton, they would not probably pass Congress," and they were therefore omitted.[1]

The session of Congress which followed the reading of the President's speech was almost wholly devoted to a discussion of the war and its objects, and to an attack upon the President for having begun it by an unconstitutional and unnecessary invasion of Mexican territory. Historical discussions as to whether the Rio Grande was ever the boundary of Texas, and as to the truth of the President's assertion that war had been begun by Mexico on American soil, were, however, of little importance compared to the instant inquiry as to what were, after all, the objects to be attained by the war. Was it to be a war of conquest? Was it intended, in other words, to acquire territory from Mexico, and, if so, how much? And, above all, if territory was to be acquired, was slavery to be permitted to exist therein?

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 258-260.

At the bottom of all the violence on the subject of the war was, on the one hand, the rooted objection of the Northern states to an extension of slave territory, and, on the other, the strong feeling of the South that if a limitation should ever be placed upon the extension of slavery the South would be doomed. Calhoun, earlier and more clearly than any other Southern man, perceived the crucial importance of these subjects. Shortly after Congress met he had a long conversation with the President, in the course of which he warned the President that if any such restriction as the Wilmot proviso were contained in a treaty with Mexico, he would be compelled to vote against ratification. He assented, indeed, to the President's statement that slavery would probably never exist in the provinces of New Mexico and California if they were ceded to the United States; but he said that though he did not desire to extend slavery, yet, "if the slavery restriction was put into a Treaty, it would involve the principle, and whatever the other provisions of the Treaty were, he would vote against it."[1]

The really vital debates in Congress centred, therefore, over the Wilmot proviso. Wilmot himself was at first willing to drop a subject which had caused so much stir at the previous session of Congress. Two days before Christmas he called on the President.

"He expressed an entire willingness," according to the President's diary, "to vote for the appropriation without the restriction, and said he would not again move the restriction, but that if it was moved by others he would feel constrained to vote for it. I told him I did not desire to extend slavery, that I would be satisfied to acquire by Treaty from Mexico the Provinces of New Mexico & the Californias, and that in these Provinces slavery could probably never exist, and the great probability was that the question would never arise in the future organisation of territorial or State Governments in these territories. I told him that slavery was purely a domestic question, and to restrict the appropriation which had been asked for, so as to require the President to insert it in a Treaty with a Foreign Power, was not only inappropriate and out of place, but that if such a Treaty were made it must be opposed by every Senator from a slave-holding State, and as one

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 283.

third of the Senators could reject a Treaty it could not be ratified, though it might be satisfactory in all other respects. I told him that tramelled with such a restriction I could not use the appropriation at all and would not do so. He said he would be satisfied with a simple legislative declaration in the Bill of the sense of Congress, without requiring it to be inserted in the Treaty, or, if it was not moved by others, he would be willing to vote for the appropriation without such a restriction in any form." [1]

But within the next few days after his visit to the President, Wilmot had evidently heard from his constituents, and on the eighth of February he reintroduced his proviso, while the appropriation bill was before the Committee of the Whole. There was, he declared, no question of abolition. He was not an abolitionist. He had supported the annexation of Texas and he did not seek to change the character of the institutions of that state. But in reference to California and New Mexico, the question was whether the South should be permitted by aggression, by invasion of right, by subduing free territory and planting slavery upon it, to wrest this territory to the accomplishment of its own sectional purposes and schemes.

By this time it had become evident to every man in Congress that the question of slavery extension would involve the most momentous consequences to the American Union, and the strongest efforts were made to avoid or postpone the consideration of such a topic either in the form of the Wilmot proviso or otherwise. One of these efforts, to which great attention was paid at that time, was a proposal by Senator Berrien, of Georgia, in an amendment he offered to the appropriation bill. The effect of it was to declare, as the true intent and meaning of Congress, that "the war with Mexico ought not to be prosecuted by this government with any view to the dismemberment of that republic, or to the acquisition by conquest of any portion of her territory." Cass, of Michigan, at once proposed as a substitute a declaration that it was the true intent and meaning of Congress that the war should be vigorously prosecuted, and that

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 289.

a reasonable indemnity should be obtained from Mexico, the nature and extent of which were proper subjects, in the first instance, for executive consideration.

Calhoun also had a panacea for curing all the ills arising from a war which he had never favored. He had always entertained an almost pathetic belief in the efficacy of negotiation with Mexico for settling all controversies, and he was convinced that the war—which he so much regretted—would never have occurred if the President had only had the wisdom to retain him in the State Department. But what he now urged was the establishment by the government of a new boundary line, upon which the United States should announce that it intended to stand, and the strict limitation of all warlike effort to a defence of that line. His reasons for advocating the "defensive line" policy were twofold. In the first place, he believed that success in the President's attempt to attack the heart of Mexico and dictate a peace to the people of that country was all but impossible.

"But there was still a deeper, a still more terrific difficulty to be met—a difficulty more vital than those to which he had alluded—a difficulty arising out of a division of sentiment which went to the very foundation of our Government. How should these lands be acquired, if any were acquired? To whose benefit should they enure? Should they enure to the exclusive benefit of one portion of the Union? We were told, and he was fearful that appearances too well justified the assertion, that all parties in the non-slave-holding portion of the Union insisted that they should have the exclusive control of this acquired territory."

After some days' reflection Calhoun therefore introduced, really by way of a substitute to Berrien's resolutions, a series of resolutions of his own, by which it was declared that the Constitution gave Congress no right to do any act whatsoever which should discriminate between the states of the Union, or by which any of them should be deprived of their full and equal right in any territory of the United States acquired or to be acquired.

Benton roughly disposed of Calhoun by saying that if anybody thought that he (Benton) was going to lay aside the

necessary business of the session to vote on such a string of abstractions, that person was greatly mistaken. Cass, however, replied at length to Calhoun, pointing out that there were but three ways of escaping from the difficulties in which the country was involved by reason of the Mexican War. The first was an abandonment of the war; the second the establishment of "a defensive line," holding the country to the north of it without any further military operations; and the third a vigorous prosecution of the war "agreeably to the public expectation and the experience of the world." As to the first, he cast it from him with contempt; as to the second, he pointed out at some length the quite obviously futile and inconclusive results of such a policy, which had failed from the time that the Romans built a wall across Britain and China had built a wall to exclude the Tartars. And he concluded that the only course open to the United States was to prosecute this war as wars had been prosecuted by other nations—to discard dangerous experiments and to hold to the experience of the world.

Webster, on his part—representing, no doubt, quite fairly the views of the majority of New England voters—strongly supported Berrien's resolution. Then and afterward Webster expressed the conviction that the policy he advocated would have solved all the difficulties in which the American government found itself involved; for if there were no new territory to be acquired the country would not have been divided over the subject of the extension of slavery. He would have avoided the controversy by destroying the subject of it; but how far the country generally, or the Whigs, for that matter, would have relished a self-denying ordinance which would have excluded Upper California from the United States was a question Webster did not attempt to answer. Berrien and his supporters presumably thought it unwise to press the issue, and his resolution was never even put to a vote; and with it fell Cass's and Calhoun's substitutes.

On some such lines, all through the short session, vehement debates continued in both houses of Congress; for

almost every bill, no matter how remote its purpose from that of the war, was apt to bring about a discussion upon the question of slavery extension; and in reality, though not always in form, the chief subject of debate was the Wilmot proviso.

On January 4, 1847, Preston King, of New York, attempted to obtain leave to introduce in the Senate a bill appropriating three million dollars, which contained as one of its clauses the famous proviso. Leave was refused, but a similar bill was soon after reported in both houses —on January 19 in the Senate and on January 20 in the House—by the chairmen of the appropriate committees, in which King's preamble and appropriating clause were exactly co[illegible], but no allusion was made to the question of slavery. It was in the course of the discussion over this bill that Wilmot again offered his proviso as above stated.

The proviso was ultimately defeated in both houses. In the Senate, the bill as reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations was passed at one o'clock in the morning of March 2 by a strict party vote of 29 to 24, Calhoun voting in the affirmative. On the next day, March 3, Wilmot again moved his proviso in Committee of the Whole, and it was then carried by a vote of 90 to 80. But with every succeeding vote in the House the proviso was voted down. The clause was struck out of the bill in the House by a vote of 102 to 97; a motion to lay the bill on the table was lost by 87 to 114; and the bill, minus the proviso, was passed by a vote of 115 to 81.

The bill as finally passed recited that it was desirable to terminate the existing war upon terms just and honorable to both nations; that the President had already given assurances to the government of Mexico of his desire to settle all questions between the two countries on the most liberal and satisfactory terms; and that the President might possibly be able to conclude a treaty of peace if means for that object were at his disposal. It further recited that "in the adjustment of so many complicated questions as now exist between the two countries, it may possibly happen that an

expenditure of money will be called for by the stipulations of any treaty which may be entered into," and it was therefore enacted that three million dollars be appropriated—

"to enable the President to conclude a treaty of peace, limits, and boundaries with the Republic of Mexico, to be used by him in the event that said treaty, when signed by the authorized agents of the two governments, and duly ratified by Mexico, shall call for the expenditure of the same, or any part thereof; full and accurate accounts for which expenditure shall be by him transmitted to Congress at as early a day as practicable."[1]

But although the debates in Congress had taken so wide a range, and so much heat had been developed against the conduct of the executive, Congress near the very close of its session passed almost every one of the measures which had been advocated by the administration.[2] Only two of their measures were defeated. One was the bill imposing duties upon tea and coffee; the other was the bill to create the office of lieutenant-general. As Polk had foreseen, the latter measure met with great opposition in Congress, for the purpose of putting Benton at the head of the American army, though not expressed in the bill, had become a matter of common gossip. The thing was ridiculous enough as it was. Benton was not a professional soldier, and it was generally believed in Congress that the President merely wished to put him forward so that Whigs, like Scott and Taylor, should not have the whole credit of the war; but what was probably most effective in defeating the bill in Congress was the personal dislike of Benton, which must have influenced many members of the Senate whom his bullying methods had repeatedly offended.[3]

[1] *An Act making further appropriation to bring the existing War with Mexico to a speedy and honorable conclusion;* 9 U. S. Stat. at Large, 174.

[2] "Warn't we gittin' on prime with our hot and cold blowin',
A condemnin' the war wilst we kep' it agoin'?"
asks the Whig politician in the *Biglow Papers.*

[3] The bill passed in the House of Representatives on February 26 by a vote of 112 to 87, but failed in the Senate. It was rather absurdly charged by some of Benton's friends that the administration had killed the measure, as they feared that if an eminent Democrat were to bring the war to a triumphant close he would inevitably become the next President. See Blair to Buchanan, Nov. 22, 1849; Moore's *Buchanan,* VIII, 305–307.

By an act of January 28, 1847, Congress authorized an issue of either short notes (one or two years) or, in the President's discretion, twenty-year bonds, for the purpose of financing the war.[1]

By another act, of February 11, ten additional regiments were to be added to the regular army "for and during the war with Mexico," one or more of which might be organized and equipped as "voltigeurs, and as foot-riflemen, and be provided with a rocket and mountain howitzer battery." The same act authorized some additional officers, a number of chaplains and surgeons, and provided for compensation for men who were wounded in the war.[2]

By an act of March 3, authority was given to organize these new regiments into brigades and divisions and, "if the efficiency of the service shall require it," to appoint three brigadier and two major generals. The same act made numerous other provisions tending to increase the efficiency of the army.[3]

The President on the same day availed himself of the authority conferred upon him, and nominated as major-generals Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri, and William Cummings, of Georgia; and as brigadier-generals George Cadwalader, of Pennsylvania, Enos B. Hopping, of New York, and Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire—the same Pierce who had just before declined a nomination as Attorney-General. All five of the nominees were at once confirmed; but Benton within the next few days declined the appointment when he discovered that he could not supersede senior officers in the field.[4]

The President all through the session had been in a state of the utmost impatience over the prolonged discussion of what he regarded as perfectly irrelevant subjects. The distracted state of the Democratic party was his constant

[1] *An Act authorizing the issue of Treasury Notes, a Loan and for other Purposes*; 9 U. S. Stat. at Large, 118.

[2] *An Act to raise for a limited Time an additional military Force, &c.*; *Ibid.*, 123.

[3] *An Act making Provision for an additional Number of general Officers and and for other Purposes*; *Ibid.*, 124.

[4] Polk's *Diary*, II, 406–419, *passim*.

topic of conversation. Slavery, he thought, could have no legitimate connection with the war in Mexico or the terms of a peace which might be concluded with that country. "To connect it with the appropriations for prosecuting the war, or with the two million appropriation with a view to obtain a peace, can result in no good, but must divide the country by a sectional line & lead to the worst consequences." Such an agitation he thought not only unwise but wicked, and he regarded the slavery question as "assuming a fearful & most important aspect."[1]

As the weeks passed, the President felt more and more helpless.

"Nearly half the session has passed," he wrote on January 14, "and they are engaged in debates about slavery and party politics, and have passed none of the essential measures which I have recommended as indispensible to the vigorous & successful prosecution of the war. With a large nominal majority in both Houses, I am practically in a minority. The several cliques & sections of the Democratic party are manifestly more engaged in managing for their respective favourites in the next Presidential election, than they are in supporting the Government in prosecuting the war, or in carrying out any of its great measures."[2]

A few days later he again confided to his diary his annoyance over the failure of Congress to adopt his measures, and his consequent inability to accomplish anything in spite of having a nominal majority of Democrats in both houses of Congress.

"The disappointments about office among the members," he thought, "and the premature contest which they are waging in favour of their favorites for the Presidency in 1848, are the leading causes of this lamentable state of things. . . . I am perfectly disgusted with the want of patriotism which seems to control the votes and course of a portion of the Democratic members. I am resolved to do my duty to the country & if I am not sustained by Congress I will fearlessly appeal to the people.

"Even the question of slavery is thrown into Congress and agitated in the midst of a Foreign War for political purposes. It is brought forward at the North by a few ultra Northern members to advance

[1] *Ibid.*, 305. [2] *Ibid.*, 338.

the prospects of their favourite. No sooner is it introduced than a few ultra Southern members are manifestly well satisfied that it has been brought forward, because by seizing upon it they hope to array a Southern party in favour of their favourite candidate for the Presidency. There is no patriotism on either side, & it is a most wicked agitation that can end in no good and must produce infinite mischief." [1]

During the first week in February he was even more troubled over the delay of Congress in passing the bill for raising ten additional regiments. Could it have been passed in December, the President thought it would have been of great importance, but by February the favorable season for military operations in Mexico was already nearly half over.

"In truth," he wrote, "faction rules the hour, while principle & patriotism is forgotten. While the Democratic party are thus distracted and divided and are playing this foolish and suicidal game, the Federal party are united and never fail to unite with the minority of the Democratic party, or any faction of it who may break off from the body of their party, and thus postpone and defeat all my measures. I am in the unenviable position of being held responsible for the conduct of the Mexican War, when I have no support either from Congress or from the two officers (Scott & Taylor) highest in command in the field. How long this state of things will continue I cannot forsee." [2]

But the session of Congress necessarily came to an end on the fourth of March, and the President and his cabinet were left free for the next nine months to make the most of the powers which had been conferred on them.

In the course of the session the President and his policies had been publicly denounced in the most violent terms, the war itself had been declared by members to be dishonorable and unjust, and yet ample means, both in men and money, had been voted, after quite inexcusable delays, for carrying it on. The members of Congress scattered, and some two weeks later New Orleans newspapers were received in Washington which contained vague rumors of a battle fought with great loss on both sides near Saltillo. It was reported that Taylor's army was in the most critical position.

[1] *Ibid.*, 347.
[2] *Ibid.*, 368. Polk invariably referred to the Whigs as "the Federal party."

## CHAPTER XL

### BUENA VISTA

While General Taylor had been scattering his troops over a line hundreds of miles in length, General Santa Anna was concentrating every available man at San Luis Potosí. A small garrison was left at Vera Cruz, and a division of infantry under General Vasquez was stationed at Tula, in the mountains in the southwestern corner of Tamaulipas, while some small bodies of cavalry were stationed along the road leading from San Luis to Saltillo. But the larger cities were denuded of their garrisons with a view to assembling an army capable of striking a decisive blow at the American invaders.

Santa Anna's preparations for an advance went forward as rapidly as the very limited means at his disposal would permit. Clothing and ammunition were manufactured and all *matériel* was put in condition for service; yet in spite of Santa Anna's utmost energy the work of preparation progressed but slowly. The commissary department could hardly have been said to exist, any more than the medical branch of the army. There were, of course, no wagons for transport and the troops had no tents. The press of the capital, however, kept urging a forward movement, and in every note of patriotism, sarcasm, and ridicule they called upon the army to leave the Capua in which they had been taking their pleasure, and to go out to meet the invaders.

It was noticeable that the mass of the people remained calm and indifferent.

"It cannot be denied," wrote an officer who was in the army at San Luis, "that the state of San Luis has distinguished itself by its patriotism and services in this war. . . . Nevertheless one failed to note throughout the republic the patriotic fire, the enthusiasm of a

people which rises *en masse* to defend its homes. The aspect of the city was tranquil; and if the presence of our troops had not given it a certain martial appearance there would have been nothing to recall the fact that the nation was sustaining a just war against invading foreigners."[1]

The attacks and taunts of the metropolitan press finally wrought upon the nerves of Santa Anna and his officers to such an extent that on January 26, 1847, orders for an advance were actually issued. The immediate occasion for those orders seems to have been the receipt on the previous day of an account of the capture of an American detachment of cavalry at a hacienda known as La Encarnacion, a place on the road between San Luis and Saltillo, and nearly fifty miles south of the latter.

This party was composed of about thirty-five of the Kentucky cavalry, which had joined Taylor after the capture of Monterey, and about the same number of men of the Arkansas cavalry, which formed a part of Wool's brigade. While in camp at the hacienda the detachment was quietly surrounded at night by a larger force of Mexican cavalry, and surrendered early the next morning, January 23, without firing a shot. One man escaped while a prisoner on the march southward, and brought back the news of the capture to Saltillo.[2]

On Wednesday, January 27, the first of Santa Anna's infantry started from San Luis on their march of two hundred and forty miles to Saltillo. They consisted of a battalion of engineers, three companies of artillery serving as infantry, and a company called the "Irish Volunteers" or the "Battalion of St. Patrick," who were in fact deserters

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 53.

[2] The men captured at La Encarnacion numbered six officers and sixty-six privates. A few days later another scouting party of volunteer cavalry, consisting of two officers and seventeen men, was captured. The prisoners were all marched to the city of Mexico, and were not released until the following autumn. An account of their adventures was published at Louisville, Kentucky, in 1848, in a pamphlet entitled *Encarnacion Prisoners*, etc. An appendix to this pamphlet contains the report of Major Gaines, commanding the first detachment captured, which is dated at San Luis Potosi February 10, 1847.

from the American army. The policy of the Mexican commanders, persistently followed up to the time of the capture of Monterey, had been to encourage desertion by every means in their power; and a number of men, mostly Irish, had deserted from Taylor's force. Some of these men had been recognized in the ranks of the Mexican army as they marched out of Monterey, and their fate if they fell into the hands of their former comrades was not difficult to predict.

Santa Anna himself, with the head-quarters staff, left San Luis on February 2, passed through the towns of Matehuala and Cedral, and on Sunday, the thirteenth, the whole army was encamped at Salado, about one hundred and forty miles from San Luis. The army suffered severely from very unusual extremes of cold and from a remarkable fall of rain and snow, and, being entirely without shelter, several men and some of the women following the army were frozen to death.

On their journey, not long after leaving San Luis, the army met both detachments of the American prisoners, who had been captured near La Encarnacion. To the latter, the sight of the marching Mexicans was of the greatest interest. The first feature which attracted their attention was "Santa Anna in person, seated in a chariot of war drawn by eight mules and surrounded by his staff elegantly and gorgeously equipped," and followed by a number of women and a train of pack-mules, among which were said to be five loaded with fighting cocks. The second point of interest was "O'Reilly and his company of deserters bearing aloft in high disgrace the holy banner of St. Patrick." Some rather unprintable compliments appear to have passed between the prisoners going south and the deserters marching north.[1]

Leaving Salado on the fifteenth, the Mexican army reached the hacienda of La Encarnacion on Wednesday, February 17, and there they halted for four days. Between one and two o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, the twenty-first, they started on what was expected to be the last stage of their journey, over an uninhabited and water-

[1] *Encarnacion Prisoners*, 43-46; Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 62.

less region. Marching well into the night, the troops were halted at midnight and lay down by the roadside for a short rest, the cavalry holding their horses by the bridle. At dawn on the following morning, the twenty-second of February, the army was again put in motion, with the expectation of finding Taylor immediately in their front at the hacienda of Agua Nueva.

We have now to see what Taylor had been about since he despatched Worth and the second division of regular troops to join Scott upon his expedition to Vera Cruz.

It will be remembered that Scott had written to Taylor, first from New York late in November and again more definitely from New Orleans late in December, to the effect that it was intended to attack Vera Cruz, and thus to open, if successful, "a new and shorter line of operations upon the capital of Mexico"; that the first great difficulty was to get together a sufficient force to give a reasonable prospect of success before the first of April, the beginning of the unhealthy season upon the coast, and that it would be necessary to take from Taylor Worth's division of regulars, two field-batteries, a thousand cavalry, and as large a force of volunteer infantry as could possibly be spared, leaving Taylor only enough to defend Monterey and keep his communications open with the mouth of the Rio Grande.

The letter from New Orleans was not received by Taylor until nearly a month after its date. Meanwhile Scott had come to the Rio Grande, and failing to meet Taylor had sent him written orders, on January 3, to detach the troops above mentioned. This latter despatch was sent on to Saltillo, thence back to Monterey, and thence toward Victoria, where Taylor then was. On January 11 Lieutenant Richey, the bearer of despatches, while riding alone in advance of his escort, was captured and murdered, and the papers were supposed by Taylor to have been transmitted to Santa Anna. If so, they would have reached Santa Anna shortly before his advance from San Luis; and his knowledge that Taylor was to be deprived of a large part of his

force, pending a descent by Scott upon Vera Cruz, might naturally have suggested to Santa Anna the urgent importance of a rapid movement upon Saltillo or Monterey before the American army could be reinforced from the United States.[1]

But whether this information really came into the hands of Santa Anna is doubtful. Santa Anna in 1849 published an answer to those who had criticised his march to meet General Taylor. His defence rested upon two assertions. In the first place, he said he had only been made general in command of the Army of the North, and therefore had no right to abandon that part of the country in order to oppose the invasion from the Gulf. In the second place, he said he was uncertain at the time his march against Taylor was undertaken whether General Scott would land at Vera Cruz at all. Indeed, he asserted, the information he then had was that Scott was collecting a large body of troops at Tampico in order to march thence directly on San Luis Potosí, and when that city was occupied to advance to the capital.[2]

American authors, on the assumption that Santa Anna had really read the despatches of which the unfortunate Lieutenant Richey was the bearer, have built up a theory of their own as to the Mexican movements. Santa Anna, it is said, having discovered from these despatches what the American plan was,

"resolved upon a campaign equalling in greatness of conception the most masterly of Frederick's, and which, had it been successful, would have placed him high on the roll of the masters of the military art. It was to launch his whole force in succession against the two columns into which our army was now divided, and by one great effort, to drive from the soil of Mexico the armies of her invaders. It being doubtful whether he could reach Vera Cruz in season to resist the landing of General Scott's column, his first movement was of necessity against General Taylor. Nowhere else could he be so sure of bringing a preponderating force to bear upon his enemy."[3]

[1] Scott, however, thought the effect would be that Santa Anna, on receipt of the news, would at once move his army to Vera Cruz.—(Scott to Marcy, Feb. 4, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 876.)

[2] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 32.

[3] Stevens, 42.

Santa Anna was never prone to undervalue his own abilities, and it seems likely that if he had really planned a campaign so brilliant, and founded upon such sound principles of the military art, he would have said so. When he wrote his defence he was being accused before the Congress of his countrymen of gross mismanagement; but his defence in respect of his northern campaign was entirely silent as to any strategic plan, and really amounted only to saying that he did not know at the time what Scott intended to do, and that he attacked Taylor because the Mexican press were taunting the army at San Luis with cowardice. It may be very well doubted, in view of his own contemporaneous and subsequent assertions, whether Santa Anna had any clearly defined plan whatever when he left San Luis.[1]

Taylor received duplicates of Scott's orders of January 3, addressed to himself and General Butler, just on the eve of leaving Victoria, and he at once wrote to Scott to say that he had been awaiting advices from him for some time past; that the letter of December 20 from New Orleans, to which Scott referred, had never been received; and that the first definite information from any source of the intention to deprive him of so large a portion of the troops under his command was what was contained in the letter just received.

"I cannot," he wrote, "misunderstand the object of the arrangements indicated in your letters. I feel that I have lost the confidence of the Government, or it would not have suffered me to remain, up to this time, ignorant of its intentions, so vitally affecting interests committed to my charge."[2]

To the adjutant-general Taylor wrote a few days later more fully, but much to the same effect.

"Having," he said, "fulfilled my duty in carrying out what I believed to be the wishes of the government, I now beg leave to invite the attention of the department to several points of grave interest to

[1] For a further exposition of Santa Anna's views, reference may be made to his manifesto of Jan. 26, 1847; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 177–184.

[2] Taylor to Scott, Jan. 15, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 362.

myself, and not without importance in their bearing upon the public service. I have, therefore, to request that this communication may be laid before the Secretary of War, and by him be submitted to the President of the United States.

"I will first speak of the extraordinary reserve manifested by the Department of War in not communicating to me the intentions of the Government—at least in regard to the withdrawal of so large a portion of my command. Had I not been deemed a safe repository of its purposes, I might, at any rate, have been instructed to hold the troops in readiness for detachment. A special messenger, despatched from Washington when the employment of Major General Scott was determined upon, would have reached me at the very latest by the 8th of December—in time to suspend the movement on Victoria, to spare a portion of the army, including myself, a long and expensive march of 400 miles, and to prevent the murder of a young officer with important despatches, now in the hands of the enemy. But, up to this moment, I have not received a syllable from the Department of War on this subject. . . .

"Again I would respectfully state that no reply has been received to my communications of October 15, November 8, and November 12, replying, respectively, to the despatches brought out by Lieutenant Armistead, Major Graham, and Mr. McLane. In those communications I expressed fully and frankly my views on many important points connected with the prosecution of the campaign, and had reason to expect at least the courtesy of an acknowledgment.

"While exercising a command which, it is well known, I never sought, it has been my constant aim to perform my whole duty without fear and without favor. The best interests of the service and the country have been my guide, and will continue to be while I remain in command, however limited may be my force or embarrassing my situation; but from the course which the department had pursued in the above particulars, I am constrained to believe that I no longer possess the confidence of the government. I can only regret that the President did not think it proper, while withdrawing so large a portion of my command in the manner above indicated, to relieve me from a position where I can no longer serve the country with that assurance of confidence and support so indispensable to success."[1]

Scott with unusual reticence replied to the letter addressed to him, saying that there were some expressions in it which, as he wished to forget them, he would not specify or recall; had he been within reach of Taylor at the time he called for troops he would have consulted him fully, but, as it was, he

[1] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Jan. 27, 1847; *Ibid.*, 1100-1102.

had been compelled to act promptly and to a considerable extent in the dark. And, he added,

"I must ask you to abandon Saltillo and to make no detachments, except for *reconnaissances* and immediate defence, much beyond Monterey. I know this to be the wish of the Government founded on reasons in which I concur; among them, that the enemy intends to operate against small detachments and posts."[1]

When Taylor received this letter he was already south of Saltillo, and in no frame of mind to accept advice from Scott or anybody else in respect to the movements of the small body of troops which remained with him.[2] After complying with Scott's demands, he had only two squadrons of regular cavalry, four batteries of field artillery (in all sixteen guns), one company of regular artillery stationed at the citadel in Monterey, two regiments of volunteer cavalry (Kentucky and Arkansas), and eight regiments of volunteer infantry with two pieces of artillery. Of the volunteers, only one regiment—Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Rifles—had ever been under fire. In addition, three regiments of volunteer infantry held the river and the line from Monterey to Camargo.[3]

Until the first of February Taylor himself had remained at Monterey, and had then set forward in person for Saltillo. Two or three days before, he had received reports from General Wool giving an account of the capture of the two reconnoitring parties from the Kentucky and Arkansas regiments of cavalry, which, Wool stated, was due entirely to disobedience of orders in failing to maintain pickets or sentinels. Wool also reported that there were nightly alarms of the approach of the enemy. It was this news that brought Taylor to the front.

On arriving at Saltillo Taylor found everything quiet. The force which made the recent captures, he learned, was

[1] Scott to Taylor, Jan. 28, 1847; *ibid.*, 864. See p. 307, above.

[2] Taylor's letters to Doctor Wood of Jan. 30 and Feb. 9, 1846, are filled with complaints against Scott and Marcy, whom he accuses of intrigue, trying to force him to resign, etc.—(*Taylor's Letters from the Battlefields*, 83–88.)

[3] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Jan. 26, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1097.

composed entirely of cavalry, and was believed to have fallen back to Matehuala; and he also was informed that a large portion of the troops at San Luis Potosí had taken the direction of Vera Cruz. On February 5 he removed his head-quarters to Agua Nueva, a hacienda about eighteen miles south of Saltillo, leaving only seven companies of volunteer infantry to hold the city.

While in camp at Agua Nueva, only a day or two after reaching it, he received Scott's letter advising him to abandon Saltillo. Taylor chose to consider Scott's language as advice merely and not as an order.

"I beg leave to say," he wrote in reply, "that I consider the occupation of that city, or rather a position in its front, as essential to the due defence of the line which I am now reduced to hold. I have, therefore, established a camp at this point, eighteen miles in advance of Saltillo, and shall concentrate here all the troops in front, except a small garrison left in that city. It is my purpose to hold this position, unless I am positively ordered to fall back by the government at Washington, to which my views and the position of affairs here are fully communicated."[1]

On the same day he wrote the adjutant-general at Washington as follows:

"Although advised by Major General Scott to evacuate Saltillo, I am confirmed in my purpose of holding not only that point, but this position in its front. Not to speak of the pernicious moral effect upon volunteer troops of falling back from points which we have gained, there are powerful military reasons for occupying this extremity of the pass rather than the other. The scarcity of water and supplies for a long distance in front compels the enemy either to risk an engagement in the field or to hold himself aloof from us; while, if we fall back upon Monterey, he could establish himself strong at Saltillo, and be in position to annoy more effectually our flanks and our communications."[2]

At Agua Nueva, therefore, Taylor stubbornly remained, drilling his raw troops and keeping a watchful eye for any indications of a movement on the part of the Mexicans. On

[1] Taylor to Scott, Feb. 7, 1847; *Ibid.*, 1162.
[2] Taylor to Adjutant-General, Feb. 7, 1847; *Ibid.*, 1110.

February 7 he wrote that there was understood to be no considerable force in his front, and he did not think it likely "that any serious demonstration would be made in this direction." A week later he wrote that he had been joined by General Wool with all the remaining troops left in the rear, and that rumors reached the camp from time to time of the projected advance of a Mexican force upon this position—"but I think such a movement improbable."[1] On that same day Santa Anna's whole army was encamped at Salado, some sixty miles distant.

When Santa Anna advanced from Salado, he was necessarily compelled to pass through the hacienda of La Encarnacion. From that point he had the choice of three routes to Saltillo. The first and best road was the direct one passing through Agua Nueva. The second road led from La Encarnacion westerly to a point known as Santa Elena, where there was a well and a tank, and whence a road led through the pass known as the Puerto del Capulin to the road leading from Parras to Saltillo, and then fell into the main road north of Agua Nueva, thus completely turning Taylor's position from the west. The third road, which was barely passable for artillery, led to the westward through a hacienda known as La Hedionda, whence a path led through the mountains coming into the main road not far to the northward of Agua Nueva, thus turning it from the east.

By Saturday, the twentieth of February, Taylor received information to the effect that a force of cavalry under General Miñon, which was estimated at about two thousand men, was operating in the mountains, with head-quarters at a hacienda known as Potosí, about sixty miles east of Saltillo, and that Santa Anna's main force was advancing on the direct road from San Luis Potosí through Cedral and La Encarnacion. But Taylor still thought that his advanced position at Agua Nueva should be maintained. As he had pointed out in writing to the adjutant-general, the whole thirty-five miles south of Agua Nueva to La Encarnacion

[1] Same to same, Feb. 14, 1847; *Ibid.*, 1113.

was through a waterless desert. If, therefore, Santa Anna should attempt to attack the American camp by an advance along the main road, his men and animals would arrive on the field of battle after a fatiguing march, unfit for further immediate exertion, and with the sole supply of water in the possession of the Americans. Santa Anna, in the language of a Mexican author, would thus place his men in the position of having to conquer their enemy in order to get a drink of water.

"It is certainly very hard that voluntarily, either because he did not carefully examine the country or because of uncalculating haste, he should have risked the fate of our arms and the fate of the republic upon the illusory idea of carrying a strong position, by soldiers who must have marched twelve leagues without water and who, in order to drink, were under the necessity of carrying a fortress at the point of the bayonet." [1]

Agua Nueva, however, was far from being a fortress. Taylor and Wool, his second in command, seem to have considered it more important to drill their men than to attempt to throw up intrenchments, and it does not appear that anything whatever was done toward adding to the natural strength of the position.

Taylor remained without definite information as to the Mexican movements, until at daybreak on Sunday morning a reconnoitring party under Lieutenant-Colonel May (who had been promoted for his gallantry at Resaca) came in with information that Miñon and his cavalry were marching in full force upon Saltillo from the east. At about noon another scouting party, under Major McCulloch, of the Texan rangers, came in from the south with definite news as to the composition and size of Santa Anna's main army, which was then at La Encarnacion. McCulloch estimated the Mexican force at about twenty thousand men.

The receipt of this news led Taylor, for reasons never fully explained, to decide hastily on abandoning Agua Nueva, notwithstanding the "powerful military reasons" which he had adduced in his letter to the War Department, and to fall

[1] *Rapida Ojeada*, 10.

back about twelve miles to the hacienda of Buena Vista. The most probable explanation of this decision was his fear for the safety of his stores at Saltillo, which were threatened by Miñon's wide turning movement. On the afternoon of Sunday, February 21, therefore, just as Santa Anna's men were starting from La Encarnacion, Taylor began his retreat from Agua Nueva. A considerable quantity of supplies had been collected at that point, and during the afternoon and evening everything was removed that could be carried off, Colonel Yell, with the Arkansas mounted volunteers, being left behind to protect the remaining stores as far as possible. Shortly after midnight Yell's advanced pickets were driven in, and he gave orders to set fire to the buildings of the hacienda and the stacks of grain, while the remaining wagons of the transport train moved off "with furious speed" for Buena Vista. Yell's cavalry (which had previously been reinforced by part of the regular dragoons and part of the Kentucky mounted volunteers) fell back in good order, reaching Buena Vista at daybreak on the morning of Monday, February 22.[1]

Santa Anna had confidently expected, from the information he received, to find Taylor in force at Agua Nueva, and he was evidently much surprised to find, on arriving near that point, that the American army had fallen back hastily and apparently in disorder. His orders to General Miñon were to fall upon Taylor's communications with Saltillo, and he therefore expected, by a rapid movement, to bring the American army speedily to bay. Santa Anna accordingly pushed forward without hesitation.

"Without giving the troops time," says Balbontin, "to get a drink of water or to fill their canteens, he compelled them to continue their advance at the double quick. He sent forward the whole of the cavalry at a gallop, on the right of the column, to support the vanguard in its pursuit of the enemy which he believed to be completely demoralised and in full retreat. Indeed he might well have believed this on seeing the road dotted with pieces of harness, and four or five

[1] Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 11–26. The author was an officer of the dragoons and an eye-witness of the scenes he described.

wagons abandoned at different places. The enemy however had taken possession of the hacienda of Buena Vista and the pass of the Angostura, which had no doubt been previously reconnoitred, and where he waited with the utmost tranquillity."[1]

It was at eleven o'clock in the morning when Santa Anna with the advance of his army came in sight of Taylor's waiting troops, and he at once sent a flag to the American camp with a letter calling upon Taylor to surrender, as he was surrounded by a force of twenty thousand men.

To this letter Taylor returned the following laconic reply:

"Sir:

"In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request."

Santa Anna, however, did not immediately attack, but waited until the arrival of the rest of his army late in the afternoon, when he pushed forward some light troops in an effort to gain the left of the American position.

The hacienda of Buena Vista (more correctly San Juan de la Buena Vista) lies about five miles south of the city of Saltillo, and derives its name from the extensive view there obtained of the surrounding scenery. Saltillo itself, a city of several thousand inhabitants and the seat of a bishop, lies in the heart of the Sierra Madre Mountains, about five thousand feet above the sea. It is situated at the southern end of an extensive plain, bounded on every side by jagged mountains or hills, which rise to perhaps as much as two thousand feet above the general level. Immediately at the southern edge of the town there appears a range of low hills two or three hundred feet high; but these do not fall off again on their southern side, being in fact the northern extremity of a plateau which extends for some distance southerly. Right and left this plateau is bounded by mountains of considerable height, which approach each other to within about a mile and a half, a little south of Buena Vista. There is therefore a level valley, varying from a

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 71.

mile and a half, at its narrowest point, to four miles in width, and having a farm called the rancho of La Encantada at its southern extremity and the city of Saltillo at the foot of the declivity, by which the valley abruptly terminates to the north.

From La Encantada a small stream of water finds its way northerly through the pass to Saltillo, keeping close to the mountains on the western side, but leaving room for a belt of irrigated fields. In February the little stream runs almost entirely dry, but the trees along its border give a touch of verdure to the prevailing dusty brown of the landscape. West of these fields the foot-hills rise very abruptly to a height of perhaps two or three hundred feet, and then the land slopes back to the high mountains. East of the stream is an irregular line of bluffs, forming the edge of a plateau which lies sixty or seventy feet above, there being barely room for a road between the stream and the bluffs which terminate the plateau. The plateau itself slopes with a very regular and gradual ascent to the base of the mountains on the easterly side of the valley. Its barren and stony surface is unfit for cultivation, and only a few straggling mesquite shrubs diversify its surface.

The hacienda of Buena Vista was a collection of adobe buildings, with the usual flat roofs and thick walls, laid out in regular streets, and capable of effective defence against troops unprovided with artillery. South of the hacienda, for some distance, the plateau is intersected by a remarkable series of ravines or barrancas, which cross it diagonally from southeast to northwest. These ravines have, of course, been formed by the torrents of water descending from the easterly mountains in the rainy season; and in a country where frost plays no part in forming the landscape, the walls of the ravines are cut sharply through the gravelly soil, and in many places stand almost perpendicular. The sides of the ravines, even near the mountains, are higher than a man's head, and, except at a few places, present almost insuperable obstacles to the movements of field artillery and great difficulties to the movements of cavalry. Near the

stream the ravines, of course, become deeper and more difficult. The only available route for Santa Anna's artillery lay, therefore, along the main road which followed closely the course of the stream; but for infantry and cavalry it was possible to advance by keeping close along the foot of the mountains near the head of the ravines.

The narrowest point in the little depressed valley, which the main stream has worn for itself between the plateau on the east and the foot-hills on the west, is called by Mexican historians La Angostura—the narrows.[1] West and south of the road at this point the stream had worn a series of deep channels, forming a net-work of gullies which extended across nearly the whole of the lower level to the foot-hills on the west, and presented a formidable obstacle to the progress of troops of any description whatever—"being upwards of twenty feet in depth, with sides so precipitous as to prevent their being ascended, except at two narrow places, without the assistance of scaling ladders."[2] At this point Captain Washington, with eight guns, was stationed, effectually commanding the approach by the road.

Just to the left of the battery at La Angostura the bluff forming the edge of the plateau extended out northwesterly, making a sort of promontory with very steep sides, about the base of which ran the road. This promontory commanded the road toward the south for a considerable distance. It was occupied by the first regiment of Illinois volunteers, supporting Washington's battery. On their left came the second Illinois regiment, two companies of dragoons and McCulloch's company of Texan volunteers. In the rear of the battery, on the road, was the second Kentucky regiment, and on the extreme right, near the mountains, were the Arkansas and Kentucky regiments of mounted volunteers. The American advanced line, therefore, was formed to the right and left of Washington's battery, which was regarded as holding the key to the position.

[1] This name seems to have been invented by members of Santa Anna's army. The local name of the spot is El Chupadero.

[2] Carleton, 8.

In the rear of the troops, on the plateau, ran one of the widest of the ravines that crossed it; and on the northerly side of this ravine were stationed the remaining troops, consisting of two regiments of Indiana volunteers, the Mississippi Rifles, two squadrons of dragoons, and the light batteries of Captains W. T. Sherman and Braxton Bragg. There was a wide interval between the American troops on the left and the foot of the easterly mountains.

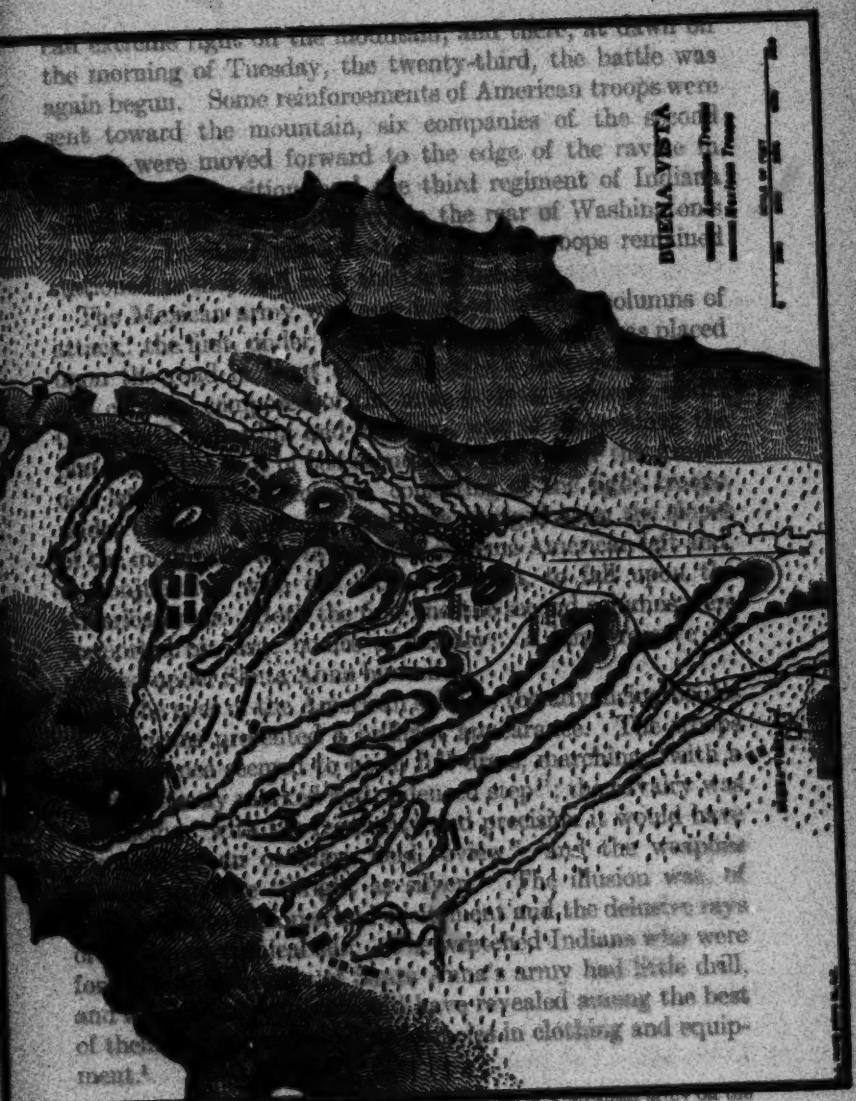
As the Mexican infantry came up, they were formed in two lines upon the plateau east of the road, with the exception of one battalion which took possession of a hill west of the stream. They had made an extraordinary march of nearly fifty miles in twenty-four hours, and had had little to eat or drink during that period.

Late in the afternoon, the Mexican light infantry having occupied the lower slopes of one of the eastern mountains, General Taylor sent forward from the extreme right a part of the Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry dismounted, with the rifle battalion from the Indiana brigade, to oppose this movement. At the same time three of Captain Washington's guns were taken from the road and placed in battery on the plateau. Taylor also sent a section of Bragg's battery, with the second Kentucky volunteers, to occupy a position on the west of the stream and somewhat in advance of the battery at La Angostura, thus forming the extreme right of the American line.

At three o'clock the battle was begun by a shot from a Mexican howitzer on the road, and immediately afterward the opposing troops on the easterly mountain began a skirmishing fire which lasted until long after dark. There was also some long-range cannonading on the road, which did little or no damage to either party. While this desultory firing was going on during the afternoon, the first Illinois had completed a parapet extending along its front on the high ridge which it occupied, and had thrown up a light breastwork in front of Washington's battery; but apart from this no effort at intrenchment seems to have been made.

During the night reinforcements were sent to the Mexi-

the morning of Tuesday, the twenty-third, the battle was again begun. Some reinforcements of American troops were sent toward the mountain, six companies of the [illegible] were moved forward to the edge of the ravine [illegible] third regiment of Indiana [illegible] the rear of Washington's [illegible] troops remained [illegible] columns of [illegible] placed [illegible] the illusion was [illegible] and the deluded rays [illegible] Indians who were [illegible] army had little drill, [illegible] revealed among the best [illegible] in clothing and equipment.[1]




[1] A graphic account of the battle, and of the march, written by a Texan agent in Mexico, will be found in a letter from A. S. Wright to Bryan, Nov. 26, 1836; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 498. The destitute condition of Santa Anna's troops when they left San Luis Potosí is set out in an

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As the Mexican [illegible] were formed in two lines upon [illegible] and, with the exception of [illegible] hill west of the ravine. They had [illegible] of Agua Fria, three miles in front, [illegible] east or [illegible] during that night.

Late in the afternoon, the [illegible] occupied the lower slopes [illegible] General Taylor [illegible] of the Arkansas and [illegible] the battalion [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

can extreme right on the mountain, and there, at dawn on the morning of Tuesday, the twenty-third, the battle was again begun. Some reinforcements of American troops were sent toward the mountain, six companies of the second Illinois were moved forward to the edge of the ravine in front of their position, and the third regiment of Indiana volunteers was placed directly in the rear of Washington's battery. In other respects the American troops remained stationed as they had been the night before.

The Mexican army was now formed in three columns of attack: the first, under General Mora y Villamil, was placed upon the road in front of Washington's battery; the second column, composed of the main body of infantry, under Generals Lombardini and Pacheco, was to move along the plateau at the foot of the mountains and attack the American left; the third column, consisting of the light troops, under General Ampudia, who were engaged upon the slopes of the mountain, was to turn the extreme American left and, in conjunction with the second column, to fall upon the American rear. Both the first and the second columns were supported by large bodies of cavalry. A large reserve remained under Santa Anna himself.

To the eyes of the American soldiers the advancing bodies of Mexicans presented a brilliant appearance. The troops at a distance seemed to be in full dress, marching "with a most perfectly marked and cadenced step"; the cavalry was advancing "with the regularity and precision it would have observed in an ordinary field review"; and the weapons seemed to shine "bright as silver." The illusion was, of course, due to distance and excitement and the delusive rays of an almost tropical sun. The wretched Indians who were forced into the ranks of Santa Anna's army had little drill, and a closer inspection would have revealed among the best of them the most marked deficiencies in clothing and equipment.[1]

[1] A queerly drawn but evidently truthful picture of a Mexican army on the march, written by a Texan agent in Mexico, will be found in a letter from A. S. Wright to Bryan, Nov. 26, 1839; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 498. The destitute condition of Santa Anna's troops when they left San Luis Potosí is set out in an

By this time it was nine o'clock in the morning, and General Lane, of the Indiana troops, commanding on the left, pushed forward the three pieces of artillery which were stationed near the foot of the mountains, with the second Indiana in support, to within two hundred yards of the advancing Mexican lines. For twenty-five minutes an unequal contest was carried on, but at last the volunteers gave way and the commander of the battery had to order a retreat, being compelled, moreover, to abandon one of his pieces after every man and horse belonging to it had either been killed or disabled.

The Mexican loss at this point seems to have been extremely heavy, but as the advanced American troops fell back the whole of the second and third Mexican columns united, advanced, and came into action. They were immediately opened upon by two guns of Captain T. W. Sherman's battery: one under Lieutenant George H. Thomas and the other under Lieutenant Samuel G. French. The other two guns of the battery, under Captain Sherman himself and Lieutenant John F. Reynolds, remained in reserve, supported by the second Illinois, who held their ground firmly until out-flanked on the left by the masses of the Mexican troops.

While this was going on, the first division of the Mexican troops came within range of Washington's battery, on the road, which at once opened upon their masses, and in a few minutes, by the rapidity and accuracy of its fire, compelled them to seek refuge in the mouths of the adjacent ravines, where they remained inactive during the remainder of the day.

It had by this time become apparent to every one that the main stress of the battle would be upon the American left, and the section of Sherman's battery which had not yet been engaged was ordered forward, while Bragg's battery and the second Kentucky infantry, on the west side of the valley, were brought back across the stream, from the right to the left of the American position. There were now seven

official communication from the acting Minister of War to Congress, dated Jan. 28, 1847; and a four weeks' march, in February, through two hundred and forty dusty miles of one of the barrenest parts of Mexico, must have reduced them almost to rags. See *Apuntes para la historia de la guerra entre México y los Estados Unidos*, App., 175.

American guns engaged on the southerly part of the plateau, supported by a handful of dragoons, with the second Kentucky and the Illinois regiments. The whole had been forced back into a line at right angles to that originally occupied, facing the easterly mountains, along the base of which nearly the whole of the Mexican army was pouring northwardly.

The left of the American position had thus been completely turned, and their skirmishers on the mountain were apparently cut off from the rest of the American troops. But as soon as they discovered that the head of the Mexican columns had interposed between them and their friends, they immediately abandoned their position and succeeded in forcing their way around the head of the intercepting column below, which for a time was held in check by the artillery and the Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry. The latter, however, suffered very heavy loss. The retreating skirmishers were pursued down the mountain by Ampudia's men, who had climbed up to the very top, and the whole American force near the foot of the mountain fell back in disorder.

About the time of this disaster General Taylor arrived on the field from Saltillo, where he had gone the night before to provide for the safety of his stores and to make arrangements for the small garrison which had been left there to guard them. He found the American line above the road facing the mountains to the east, the extreme left being now formed by the Mississippi regiment near the hacienda of Buena Vista and two companies of the second United States dragoons who had formed Taylor's escort. The heads of the ravines near the mountains having been turned or crossed at their shallowest part, the American army had lost nearly all the natural advantages of the ground.

The Mississippi regiment, moving forward on the left, soon came in contact with the head of the Mexican columns. The steadiness of the Mississippians and the superior quality of their weapons quickly checked the Mexican advance and then in a few moments turned it back. As the Mexican infantry wavered, the Mississippians were joined by the third

Indiana, which until then had been stationed in the rear of Washington's battery and had thus far taken no part in the contest. The two regiments were, however, unable to check the Mexican cavalry, which were at this moment moving down directly toward the buildings at Buena Vista. In front of the hacienda, however, between it and the mountains, was a mixed mass of American cavalry consisting of Colonel May's dragoons and a portion of the Arkansas and Kentucky troops, and they succeeded in stopping temporarily the Mexicans and even in driving them back.

Meanwhile, the stragglers from what had been the American left, reached the hacienda, and while some of them continued their flight as far as the city of Saltillo (where they reported that the battle was lost and the American army in full retreat) a part were halted at the hacienda and posted in and on top of the buildings. At the same time the remaining American troops on the southern part of the plateau began pushing slowly forward toward the mountain, maintaining a heavy fire, at close range, both of artillery and musketry.

For a long while the conflict was continued without any decided success on the part of either army, the Mexican line extending in a sort of long semicircle from the road in front of Washington's battery, through a broad ravine up to the foot of the mountains, and thence northerly along their base to a point somewhere opposite Buena Vista. Toward their centre, near the mountain which Ampudia's troops had taken the night before, a Mexican battery had been established under the direction of General Micheltorena, whom we have seen governor of California and who was now Santa Anna's chief of staff. The American line, with the exception of Washington's battery, which held the road, was ranged irregularly along the western edge of the plateau, facing east, toward the mountains.

At about noon the Mexican right and centre began visibly to give way before the destructive artillery fire, and Taylor ordered four of the guns then on the plateau to proceed to the American left toward Buena Vista, which was now being

again attacked by a body of Mexican cavalry under Torrejon. Torrejon's men were unsuccessfully opposed by the same force of American cavalry as before, and a fierce mêlée ensued, a large part of the Mexicans, mingled with their American opponents, galloping headlong through the hacienda. A part of the Mexicans, however, turned back to the mountains, while another part rode down the road, crossed the stream, and returned on its west bank to join the Mexican reserves—having thus ridden completely round the American army. Lieutenant Reynolds's guns, which arrived at the hacienda as the cavalry swept by, opened upon them as they galloped away.

A third cavalry attack was now made upon the left of the American line—this time somewhat nearer the centre—where the Mexicans were opposed by the Mississippi regiment and the third Indiana. The Mexicans came down the plateau from the mountains at a gallop, the American infantry withholding its fire until it could be effectively delivered. As the Mexicans came on, the resolute attitude of the silent American line had its effect. The speed of the advancing riders was seen to slacken; they hesitated; they pulled up to a walk, and at length they halted before the thin infantry line. As they did so, a volley from the well-aimed muskets and rifles, with one gun of Captain Sherman's battery firing grape and canister within less than a hundred yards, so cut up the head of the column that in a moment the whole brigade gave way and fled toward the mountain, leaving behind large numbers of killed and wounded. The repulse of the Mexican cavalry was immediately followed up by an advance of the extreme American left, which was accompanied by a sharp thunder-shower—very remarkable at that dry season of the year. At the same time the whole of the American artillery on the plateau kept up a steady fire upon the Mexican columns, which had now begun to fall back in confusion toward and along the foot of the mountains.[1]

[1] At this time, according to Taylor, a curious episode occurred. Some Mexican officers came up, apparently with the intention of opening a parley.

As the defeated Mexican right retired, Santa Anna ordered forward a part of his reserves. They came in upon the right flank of the American troops as they stood facing the retreating Mexicans near the mountains. The Kentucky and Illinois regiments, who formed the extreme right of this line, were driven back and down one of the ravines with very heavy loss, but the Mexican advance was momentarily checked by the unsupported artillery on the plateau. The moment was the most critical of the day for Taylor's army; but the artillery from the extreme left came up barely in time. Two more of the American guns were captured. Firing with desperate haste, the artillery under Bragg and Sherman poured grape-shot into the Mexican reserves at the shortest range. Their pieces, unlimbered far in advance of the approaching supports, kept up their fire until the infantry from the left—mainly Mississippi and Indiana—came to restore the battle. For some time a doubtful struggle continued, but at length the Mexicans began to fall back, and soon the whole of their army had given ground. It was not until nearly five o'clock in the afternoon that the American line was enabled to advance for even a short distance; and at length, at sunset, the two armies were left standing upon almost the same ground on which they had stood the night before.

While this long and desperate battle was raging to the southward of Buena Vista, Miñon with his brigade of cavalry had arrived in front of Saltillo under orders from Santa Anna to remain there until the American troops gave way, and then to intercept their retreat. The American garrison of Saltillo, which occupied a redoubt just south of the town, fired upon them at long range without doing any material damage, and a sortie was made which also proved more noisy than effective. Miñon, however, took prisoners one or more

They were understood to say that they came from Santa Anna to ask Taylor what he wanted. In reply to this question he sent Wool with a flag of truce, and the American batteries ceased firing. The Mexicans, however, paid no attention to the flag and Wool returned. This pause, it is thought, may have been contrived so as to enable the Mexican right to extricate themselves. See Ripley, I, 414.

men who had fled from the field of battle, and shortly afterward fell back to the east, thus reopening communication between Saltillo and the American army.

At sunset the firing in front of Buena Vista had died away, and the exhausted troops on both sides lay down to obtain much-needed rest. The night, as usual at that season and in that altitude, was extremely cold, but in view of the immediate presence of the two armies few fires were lighted.

During the night the American wounded were removed to Saltillo, and preparations were made to meet the attack which Taylor felt sure would have to be met in the morning. The troops which had garrisoned Saltillo were ordered to the front, a force which had been holding the road to Monterey with four heavy guns was reported near at hand, and a few uninjured men were sent back from Buena Vista to hold the city. On the whole, Taylor was as strong on the morning of the twenty-fourth as on the morning of the previous day; but at dawn of day he discovered that there was no Mexican army in front of him. They had withdrawn early in the night, and by the time Taylor discovered their retreat they had reached Agua Nueva.[1]

Santa Anna, as soon as darkness fell, had given the order to retreat, and his troops—worn out by the long marches and fierce fighting of the previous three days—had immediately started by the feeble light of a new moon. The movement was made without attracting attention from the American lines, and was at first conducted in tolerable order; but as the moon set and the darkness increased the various bodies of the army fell into confusion, the exhausted men stumbling along in the night, and finally throwing themselves on the ground to rest wherever possible. Most of them succeeded in reaching Agua Nueva before daylight.

[1] Taylor's report of the battle of Buena Vista, with the subreports from his officers, is in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 97–210. Santa Anna's report, dated February 27, 1847, is in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 620–624. Accounts by other eye-witnesses are, from the American side, that of Captain Carleton (first U. S. dragoons) in his *Battle of Buena Vista*, 21–132; and, from the Mexican side, that of Lieutenant Balbontin in his *Invasion Americana*, 71–95. See also Ripley, I, 302–444; Howard's *General Taylor*, 240–273; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra entre México y los E. U.*, 97–104.

There the army remained encamped until the afternoon of Friday, the twenty-sixth, when they began their toilsome march across the intervening deserts toward the city of San Luis. Such of the wounded as could be moved were sent on in the front, either in wagons or in improvised litters, each carried by four soldiers. The men, weary and discouraged, weakened by hunger, many of them sick themselves, frequently dropped their charges by the way-side. The road was lined with stragglers, with the wounded, and with the dead. A shocking picture has been drawn of the first night of this retreat on the waterless wastes between Agua Nueva and La Encarnacion.

"An icy breeze drove above our heads the powdery dust which the column raised in marching. The pale moon, which seemed to career madly across the clouds, barely lighted up this sombre scene, contrasting with the hot light of entire groves of burning palms, and of prairies covered by sheets of flame caused by the fire at the hacienda, which had been started on the night of the twenty-first and had spread unchecked.

"The troops who formed the rear guard soon overtook and passed the convoy of wounded, producing an inevitable confusion. The setting of the moon was another cause of disorder; and the poor wounded were victims of a thousand inhuman acts. The vanguard began arriving at La Encarnacion at one in the morning, and, as at Agua Nueva, each man lay down how and where he could. This night also might with reason be designated as the *noche triste*."[1]

On the same Friday that Santa Anna retreated from Agua Nueva, Taylor, who had only advanced on Wednesday three or four miles from the battle-field, received news that the Mexicans were beginning to break up their camp and were falling back toward San Luis. He immediately put his troops in motion, and on Sunday, the twenty-seventh, his army was again encamped at Agua Nueva, after less than a week's absence.

"The ruins of the village," says Carleton, "were literally crowded with the enemy's wounded, and many who had died were lying about

[1] Balbontin, 96. See, as to the original *noche triste*, Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, II, 364-380.

still unburied. Here we learned from the surgeons and wounded officers, who had been left behind, that the whole Mexican army was in a state of utter disarray and demoralization; that four thousand men, at least, had deserted, three thousand of them having abandoned their colors on the night of the twenty-third."

Taylor's horses were in no condition at that time to attempt a vigorous pursuit, but on the first of March a small detachment of cavalry, accompanied by two guns and some infantry in wagons, left Agua Nueva and followed the line of march which Santa Anna three days before had pursued.

"There was every indication for the whole of the way," according to the same eye-witness, "of a most hurried retreat and the most dreadful distress. The road was literally strewed with the dead and dying and with those perishing from fatigue and want of water. It was a most melancholy and touching picture, that of soldiers in uniform, who, having been spared in battle, were now yielding up their lives without a wound. . . . We imagined, that, during the battle, and upon the field when the conflict was ended, and afterwards upon the road over which the enemy had retreated, we had witnessed human suffering in its most distressing forms. But such was not the case. The scenes presented to our eyes on entering within the walls of Encarnacion were so filled with extreme and utter agony that we at once ceased to shudder at the remembrance of any misery we had ever before looked upon."[1]

So much of Santa Anna's army as was in a condition to move had abandoned La Encarnacion two days before the American advance reached it. Struggling along the dry and stony tracks that led to the south, the remnant of the army, broken and dispirited, at last arrived at San Luis Potosí by March 12, and Santa Anna himself set out to restore order in the capital and to take over the government from Gómez Farías.

The numbers of which Santa Anna's army was composed have been very variously stated. He himself, in his summons to Taylor on the morning of the battle, announced that he had under him twenty thousand men. This doubtless was an intentional exaggeration. According to one Mexican author,

[1] Carleton, 143, 146–148.

Santa Anna's entire army, including the detachments which had left San Luis before him, amounted to twenty-one thousand three hundred and forty men; and this did not include the troops who were left behind at San Luis.[1]

Santa Anna's official report states that when he left San Luis Potosí he had the following force:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Twenty-eight battalions of infantry and engineers | 13,422 | men |
| Thirty-nine squadrons of cavalry | 4,348 | " |
| Seventeen guns with | 413 | " |
| | 18,183 | " |
| To which must be added commissioned officers | 1,342 | " |
| Making a total force of | 19,525 | " |

From this were to be deducted the detachments left at San Luis and at various points on his line of communications, two battalions of infantry left in reserve at Matehuala, and a brigade of cavalry under Urrea (one of Santa Anna's Texas subordinates), who had been sent by way of Tula to raid the neighborhood of Monterey.

The losses on the northward march, from sickness and desertion, numbered about a thousand; but some detached parties had been picked up at Matehuala and elsewhere along the road, partially, at least, making good these losses. After Miñon had been detached with a force which Santa Anna stated at a thousand sabres, the army at Encarnacion on February 19 numbered 14,048 non-commissioned officers and privates and 1,104 commissioned officers, or 15,152 in all. Adding Miñon's command, the entire Mexican force on or near the field of battle must have numbered between sixteen thousand and sixteen thousand five hundred men, of whom over five thousand were cavalry.[2]

As to the American force, the return of the troops engaged in the action showed 4,759 officers and men of all ranks,[3]

[1] *Rapida Ojeada*, 7.

[2] Full details are given in the appendix to Santa Anna's *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 66, 67.

[3] Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 142.

so that it may be confidently assumed that Taylor had considerably less than one-third of Santa Anna's force.

The losses on the Mexican side were correspondingly far greater than those on the American. Taylor had 746 killed, wounded, and missing—not quite sixteen per cent of his total force.[1] The Mexican losses, as reported, were no less than 3,494, of which more than half were reported missing and were either prisoners or deserters. This was about twenty-three per cent of Santa Anna's army. But these figures, bad as they were, were not so bad as those published by Santa Anna himself. He stated that three days after the battle, at the camp of Agua Nueva, he had with him but 9,905 officers and men, a loss in the week of no less than 5,247, or more than thirty-four per cent of his original force. Moreover, these figures did not include the casualties—whatever they were—which were suffered by General Miñon's detachment; nor did they include the losses sustained in the subsequent disastrous retreat across the desert, which were estimated in all accounts at not less than three thousand men, the greater part of whom were deserters. If these figures are to be relied on, Santa Anna lost fully half his army.[2]

Santa Anna's retreat was, of course, a subject of the most hostile criticism on the part of his countrymen. It was asserted that if the battle had been renewed on Wednesday, the twenty-fourth, the Mexican army could not have failed to gain the victory. The mere scarcity of provisions, it was argued, was not a sufficient cause for falling back, because there were no additional provisions to be got short of La Encarnacion, many miles in the rear, and as a matter of fact it turned out that with merely the provisions the troops had with them, they were able to maintain themselves for two or three days at Agua Nueva. The excuse that the men were tired out was said to be a reason for permitting them to rest on Tuesday night, rather than for compelling them to march eleven or twelve miles back to a place where they might have had to fight if the Americans, as was quite possi-

[1] *Ibid.*, 143. [2] Balbontin, 91; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 67.

ble, had attempted to pursue them. A retreat was certain to cause great discouragement in the ranks, while a prospect of advancing and capturing the large stores of supplies belonging to the American army would have been an incentive to renew the battle. A renewed battle on the twenty-fourth of February would certainly not have cost any more losses than the fatal retreat to San Luis, and would probably have resulted in the capture of Taylor and his entire army, who were helpless in the midst of a hostile population.

But more fundamental criticisms were made in relation to Santa Anna's strategy. What, it was asked, was the objective with which the campaign was undertaken? Why did he advance upon the distant right flank of the American forces, across hundreds of miles of desert, and leave Vera Cruz and the neighborhood of the city of Mexico entirely unprotected? Why did he advance from La Encarnacion to make a frontal attack upon an enemy who might be assumed to be holding a strong fortified position in the mountains? Why, when he discovered that the position of Agua Nueva had been abandoned, did he make no attempt to turn Taylor's new position by a wide flanking movement? And why did he advance with such precipitate haste beyond Agua Nueva, bringing his men, weary and unready, upon the field of battle?

Santa Anna's own reply to the last criticism was that when he found Taylor in position in front of Buena Vista it was impossible to avoid an action, for to fall back without fighting would have been a defeat for the Mexican arms. To defer an attack, and to undertake strategic movements at that moment, would have resulted in the army perishing with hunger, or at least suffering severe hardships in a country totally lacking in supplies. His excuse for having undertaken the expedition was, as already stated, the newspaper attacks upon his apparent policy of inaction in the "Capua" of San Luis Potosí. Some writers, he protested, had done what they could to embarrass his plans, while they kept up a most unjust fire (*dispararon los tiros más injustos*) upon the army as a whole and upon individual

officers. He, too, like Scott, had suffered from a fire in the rear.[1]

Santa Anna, in his report of the battle, did not, of course, hesitate to claim it as a victory. The Encarnacion prisoners, two pieces of American artillery, and three guidons taken in battle seemed ample proof; and the news was greeted in the city of Mexico with the usual demonstrations of high-masses, ringing of bells, and official speeches. In the United States, on the contrary, the first reports were extremely grave, for, as we have seen, the rumors ran that a battle had been fought near Saltillo with great losses on both sides, and that Taylor's army was in a most critical position.[2] The fact was that Taylor's communications had been cut off by Urrea's cavalry brigade, which Santa Anna had detached with orders to operate in the neighborhood of Monterey. Travelling by way of Tula and Montemorelos, Urrea fell upon some supply trains and small detachments of American troops in the neighborhood of Marin, not far north of Monterey, and succeeded in capturing some wagons, killing a number of teamsters, and isolating the city of Monterey and Taylor's immediate forces. The raiders were, however, shortly driven back and retired into the mountains; and thenceforward the whole of the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon remained in peaceable possession of the American troops during the remainder of the war.[3]

Until the road between Monterey and Camargo was cleared, no authentic intelligence could be received in the United States from Taylor's army, but rumors of disaster came pouring in, based, no doubt, upon stories received through Mexican sources along the line of the Rio Grande. It was not until the first of April that Taylor's official despatches were received in Washington, and on the same day information was received that General Scott's forces had landed near Vera Cruz. The President on that day ex-

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 20-29, *passim*; *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 620.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 433 *et seq.*

[3] For details, see Taylor's official reports in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1119, 1123.

pressed his opinion of Taylor in the following words, which may very well serve as a summary of the criticisms made by other writers:

"Had Gen'l Taylor," wrote the President, "obeyed his orders & occupied Monterey and the passes beyond it, the severe loss of our army, including many valuable officers, would have been avoided. It was great rashness to take the position he did in advance of Saltillo. Having done so he [is] indebted not to his own good generalship, but to the indomitable & intrepid bravery of the officers and men under his command for his success. He exposed them to an opposing army of three or four times their number. The Mexican army were suffering for want of food, and took up their retreat shortly after the battle. Gen'l Taylor is a hard fighter, but has none other of the qualities of a great General. From the beginning of the existing War with Mexico he has been constantly blundering into difficulties, but has fought out of them, but with very severe loss. His first blunder was in separating his army from his supplies, which caused the battle of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. His second was in moving upon Monterey with an inadequate force, leaving more than two-thirds of his whole army behind him with [the] battering trains, & this caused the hard battle & some loss at Monterey; & the last is in taking his position so far in advance of Monterey, which caused the late sanguinary battle. I rejoice that our brave army have been successful in this battle, but deeply lament the severe loss they have sustained."[1]

Taylor was also criticised for his tactics, especially in leaving his left flank so weak and unduly strengthening his right, when it should have been apparent that Santa Anna's only chance of success was to turn the American left.

The American public, however, when they received the news of the victory of Buena Vista, heightened as it was by coming immediately after the depressing rumors of defeat, were by no means disposed to be critical. Taylor had conquered in four hard-fought battles—the first battles of the war. He and his officers had not failed to let it be known that he had been deprived of a large part of his army at the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 452; Ripley, I, 434–436. General I. I. Stevens contends that if General Taylor had retired upon Monterey Santa Anna would not have followed him, and therefore that Taylor was right in holding his position in advance of Saltillo. But this assumes that Santa Anna was carefully following out a strategic plan worthy of Frederick.—(Stevens, 39, 40.)

very moment when he was about advancing upon the enemy, and he became at once a hero in the public estimation. In any view of the matter, his achievements at Buena Vista were worthy of the thanks of the nation, which Congress later conveyed to him; but their more immediate effect was to make him a presidential possibility. He seemed to an excited public an admirably successful general whom an envious Democratic administration had done its best to deprive of the means of victory; and therefore, though he was a slave-owner and a Southerner, and though his politics were not known, and he had had no experience of public life, the Whig newspapers with a shout proclaimed him their candidate for the Presidency.

## CHAPTER XLI

### CHIHUAHUA AND VERA CRUZ

WHEN General Kearny started upon his march from New Mexico to California near the end of September, 1846, he left behind him at Santa Fe a regiment of Missouri volunteers under Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan.[1] Shortly afterward another regiment from Missouri under Colonel Sterling Price arrived in New Mexico, and, in accordance with the general purposes of the government at Washington, Doniphan set out in command of a small body to march to Chihuahua, where it was expected that he would effect a junction with General Wool's force marching from San Antonio.[2] So far as Wool was concerned, the plan was impracticable, owing, in the first place, to physical difficulties of which the authorities in Washington were ignorant, and, in the second place, because it proved to be much more important that Wool should unite with Taylor than with Doniphan.

Further orders from Kearny directed that before proceeding to Chihuahua Doniphan and his regiment should march into the Navajo country, cause all the prisoners and stolen property held by those Indians to be given up, and "require of them such security for their future good conduct as he may think ample and sufficient, by taking hostages or otherwise." How skilfully Doniphan executed this order, how he made a treaty with the Navajos, and how he brought about peace between the Navajos and the Zuñi Indians, need not be here related. His work was finished early in December,

[1] See Chapter XXXV, above.

[2] Kearny's orders No. 30 merely directed Doniphan to "proceed with his regiment to report to Brigadier-General Wool" at Chihuahua, five hundred and fifty miles away, in the very heart of an enemy's country!

and he was then ready to begin his long march to El Paso and Chihuahua.[1]

The town of El Paso was then held by a small detachment of Mexican troops, while Doniphan's men were assembled at Valverde, nearly two hundred miles further up the Rio Grande. His entire force, when he started upon his journey to Chihuahua, consisted of eight hundred and fifty-six effective mounted men, all armed with rifles; but he had ordered a battery of artillery with a hundred men to follow and join him at the earliest moment.

The march began about the middle of December, 1846, the rear guard, with the wagon-train and Doniphan himself, leaving Valverde on the nineteenth. The column suffered great hardship in toiling through the desert (the *Jornada del Muerto*), which they were compelled to cross for a distance of about ninety miles; but at last, on the afternoon of Christmas Day, the advance, consisting of about five hundred men, had reached a point twenty-five miles from El Paso, where they pitched their camp at a place called Brazito, where an island divides the Rio Grande into two arms or branches, the smaller of the two being on the easterly side of the valley, on which the Americans camped. The wagon-trains, escorted by the remainder of Doniphan's command, were several miles in the rear.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon the men at the camp were engaged in the usual occupations of obtaining wood and water for cooking purposes and forage for their animals, when a large cloud of dust to the southward announced the approach of a Mexican force. As subsequently ascertained by the Americans, this force consisted of 1,220 men, of whom 537 were cavalry, with one piece of artillery. They were in part regular troops and in part local militia or volunteers.

The American line was at once formed, facing eastward, with its back to the river, both wings being somewhat refused; and the Mexican line was formed about half a mile

[1] For an account of Doniphan's Indian campaign, see Hughes, 143-203; Connelley, 266-316.

away, facing and overlapping at each end the American line.

The skirmish seems to have consisted of a general advance by the Mexican force, firing wildly and ineffectually as it came on, until it was met and repulsed by an accurate and sudden fire from the American rifles—a part of the Americans, at least, lying flat upon their faces and reserving their fire until the Mexicans came within sixty paces. This novel method of awaiting attack seems to have surprised and deceived the Mexican forces; and as the hitherto silent American line delivered their volley at short range, the Mexicans fell back to the hills in disorder, some of them retreating along the plain and some of them taking refuge on the heights. They were pursued by the Americans for about a mile. A part of the Mexican force continued their flight to Chihuahua, while the local troops appear to have dispersed to their homes. The affair did not last more than twenty minutes.

According to American accounts, the Mexican losses were 43 killed, about 150 wounded, and 5 prisoners; while the Americans had but seven wounded. The Mexican howitzer, with a quantity of munitions of war, fell into Doniphan's hands.[1]

Doniphan's wagon-train and the rest of his men came up during the evening, and on the following morning the whole force resumed their advance, meeting with no further opposition. They crossed the Rio Grande and entered El Paso on the twenty-eighth of December, Doniphan agreeing to respect the lives and property of all citizens who remained peaceable and neutral during the war.[2]

At El Paso Doniphan remained for six weeks, very much to the satisfaction of his men who found the comforts of the village—situated in the midst of smiling fields which for more than two centuries had been irrigated and well culti-

[1] See Doniphan's Official Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 497. Hughes, 260–267; Edwards, *Campaign in New Mexico*, 52–57; Connelley, 370–378; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 139–143.

[2] The town which then went by the name of El Paso is now known as Ciudad Juarez. The present town of El Paso, on the north or east bank of the Rio Grande, was founded some time afterward.

vated—extremely seductive after the hardships and labors they had undergone almost continuously since leaving Missouri, six months before. At length, however, the expected reinforcements of artillery arrived, and on the evening of February 8, 1847, Doniphan set out with 924 men and six guns, his own wagon-train, and 315 wagons belonging to American merchants who were conveying goods in the ordinary course of their business to the city of Chihuahua.

For more than two weeks the march was uneventful through a desolate country, and was entirely unopposed. On the day of the battle of Buena Vista the caravan was still eighty-four miles north of the city of Chihuahua. Marching steadily forward, Doniphan learned on the twenty-seventh of February that the Mexican troops occupied in force a strong position, known as the Pass of the Sacramento, some eighteen miles north of the city—a position which, it seems he had previously learned through Indian sources, could readily be turned.

At the point where the Mexican army awaited the arrival of the Americans the road to Chihuahua crossed at right angles a low ridge lying between two streams which ran from west to east, directly across the line of the American advance. The first of these—dry in the month of February—was the Arroyo Seco; the second, beyond the ridge occupied by the Mexicans, was the Rio Sacramento. To the American left the ridge rose abruptly out of the plain, and there the Mexican army was strongly intrenched, with artillery commanding the road for a considerable distance. Their line of earthworks ran along the edge of the bluff at the easterly end of the ridge, and then turned off at a point just east of the road, and ran south, parallel with it. One or two other guns were in position on a hill south of the Rio Sacramento. To the west of the road the ridge fell gradually away for a considerable distance, so that about a mile from the point where the road crossed the ridge it was possible for wagons and artillery to ascend the slope and continue along the ridge to join the road again.

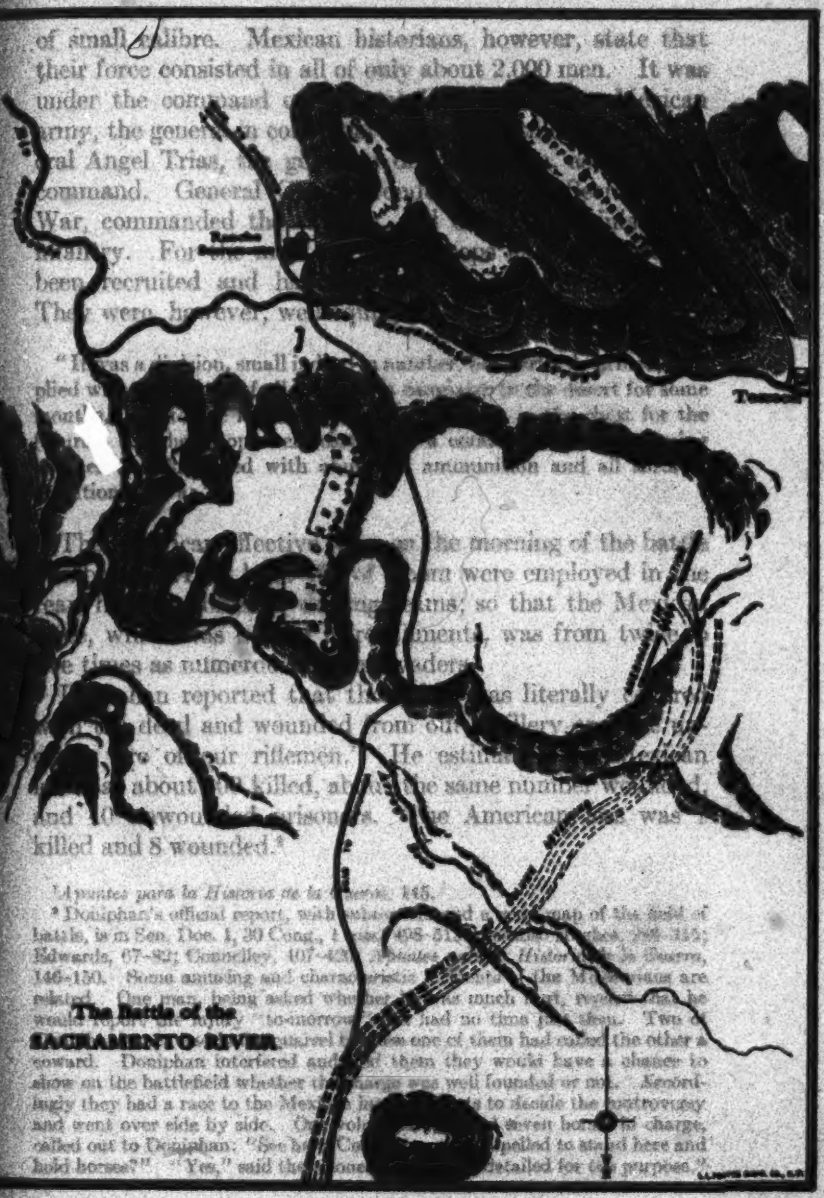
Starting at daylight from his camp at a hacienda by the

name of Saus, thirty-two miles from Chihuahua, Doniphan marched eleven miles, arriving within three miles of the Mexican position toward the middle of the day, and at once made a close reconnoissance of the Mexican position. His wagons and artillery were then formed into a column of five vehicles abreast, the artillery in the centre with two wagons to the right and two to the left of each gun. The intervals between the wagons were occupied by troops. About two hundred men marched in advance.

Sweeping easily across the open prairie without their full strength being apparent, the American troops rapidly gained the western end of the ridge. The artillery was there run forward and unlimbered, while the rest of the troops dismounted and deployed as infantry to the right and left of the battery. The horses were left behind with the wagons, under charge of a small guard.

As soon as the Mexicans observed this movement of the Americans, a force, estimated by Doniphan at a thousand cavalry with four guns, advanced along the ridge, halted, and opened fire at a distance of about twelve hundred yards. An artillery duel continued for some time, the Americans having two men wounded and some horses and mules disabled, until at length the Mexicans fell back on their intrenchments in disorder. The whole American line then advanced directly upon the Mexican works, the right of the line first coming in contact with their enemy. Without a pause the American force swept over the Mexican earthworks, and in a very few minutes the entire ridge was cleared of the flying Mexican troops, who left all their artillery, provisions, and supplies in the hands of the Americans. It was San Jacinto over again.

The Mexican force, according to Doniphan's report, which was said to have been based upon returns found among the Mexican baggage, consisted of 1,200 cavalry from Durango and Chihuahua, together with the Vera Cruz dragoons; 1,200 infantry from Chihuahua; 300 artillerists; and 1,420 rancheros badly armed with lassos, lances, and machetes; or, in all, 4,120 men. They had 16 pieces of artillery, mostly



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of small calibre. Mexican historians, however, state that their force consisted in all of only about 2,000 men. It was under the command of [illegible] army, the general-in-chief, General Angel Trias, [illegible] command. General [illegible] War, commanded the [illegible] cavalry. For [illegible] been recruited and [illegible] They were, however, [illegible]

"[illegible] was a division, small in [illegible] supplied with [illegible] the heart for some [illegible] for the [illegible] with [illegible] ammunition and all [illegible] tion.

[illegible] effective [illegible] the morning of the battle [illegible] were employed in the [illegible] guns; so that the Mexican [illegible] was from two [illegible] times as numerous [illegible] leaders.

[illegible] reported that the [illegible] was literally [illegible] dead and wounded from our artillery [illegible] few of our riflemen. He estimated [illegible] about [illegible] killed, about the same number [illegible] and 100 would-be prisoners. The American [illegible] was killed and 8 wounded.[2]

[1] *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 145.

[2] Doniphan's official report, with [illegible] and [illegible] map of the field of battle, is in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., [illegible] 408-51[illegible] [illegible] 308-315; Edwards, 67-82; Connelley, 107-43; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 146-150. Some amusing and characteristic [illegible] the Mexicans are relating [illegible] one man being asked why he [illegible] much [illegible] replied that he would report the [illegible] to-morrow [illegible] had no time [illegible] then. Two of [illegible] quarrel [illegible] one of them had called the other a coward. Doniphan interfered and told them they would have a chance to show on the battlefield whether the charge was well founded or not. Accordingly they had a race to the Mexican [illegible] to decide the controversy and went over side by side. [illegible] even horse and charge, called out to Doniphan: "See here, Colonel, [illegible] compelled to stand here and hold horses?" "Yes," said the [illegible] detailed for that purpose."

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SACRAMENTO RIVER

of small calibre. Mexican historians, however, state that their force consisted in all of only about 2,000 men. It was under the command of General Heredia, of the Mexican army, the general in command of this department, with General Angel Trias, the governor of Chihuahua, as second in command. General García Conde, formerly Secretary of War, commanded the cavalry, and General Justiniani the infantry. For the most part the troops had only recently been recruited and had not been previously under fire. They were, however, well equipped.

"It was a division, small indeed in number, but perfectly armed, supplied with provisions of all kinds for a campaign in the desert for some months, paid to the last soldier, and with funds in the chest for the future. All the troops were clothed in a comfortable and becoming manner and furnished with abundant ammunition and all sorts of munitions of war."[1]

The American effective force on the morning of the battle numbered 924, at least 100 of whom were employed in the rear, holding horses or driving teams; so that the Mexican force, which was behind intrenchments, was from twice to five times as numerous as the invaders.

Doniphan reported that the field "was literally covered with the dead and wounded from our artillery and the unerring fire of our riflemen." He estimated the Mexican losses at about 300 killed, about the same number wounded, and 40 unwounded prisoners. The American loss was 1 killed and 8 wounded.[2]

[1] *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 145.

[2] Doniphan's official report, with subreports and a good map of the field of battle, is in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 498–513. See also Hughes, 286–315; Edwards, 67–82; Connelley, 407–420; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 146–150. Some amusing and characteristic incidents of the Missourians are related. One man, being asked whether he was much hurt, replied that he would report the injury "to-morrow," but had no time just then. Two of Doniphan's men had had a quarrel because one of them had called the other a coward. Doniphan interfered and told them they would have a chance to show on the battlefield whether the charge was well founded or not. Accordingly they had a race to the Mexican intrenchments to decide the controversy and went over side by side. One volunteer who had seven horses in charge, called out to Doniphan: "See here, Colonel! am I compelled to stand here and hold horses?" "Yes," said the colonel, "if you are detailed for the purpose."

On the next day, March 1, 1847, without any further opposition from the Mexican forces, Doniphan and his men took possession of the city of Chihuahua, releasing a number of American merchants who had been arrested and held in prison for some time previously. Benton's friend, James Magoffin, who had been among them, was not found, as he had been carried off by the Mexican troops in their hasty retreat toward Durango.

At Chihuahua Doniphan remained for about two months, preserving good order in the city, apparently to the entire satisfaction of the inhabitants. When he arrived, his information (received, of course, from Mexican sources) was that General Wool, to whom he had been directed to report, was shut up in Saltillo by Santa Anna.

"Our position," he wrote, "will be ticklish, if Santa Anna should compel Taylor and Wool even to fall back. All Durango, Zacatecas and Chihuahua will be down upon my little army. We are out of the reach of help, and it would be as unsafe to go backward as forward.—High spirits and a bold front, is perhaps the best and the safest policy. My men are rough, ragged, and ready, having one more of the R's than Gen. Taylor himself. We have been in service nine months, and my men, after marching two thousand miles, over mountains and deserts, have not received one dollar of their pay, yet they stand it without murmuring. Half rations, hard marches, and no clothes! but they are still game to the last, and curse and praise their country by turns, but fight for her all the time."[1]

It was not until March 18 that Doniphan received news through the Mexican newspapers of the result of the battle of Buena Vista, which they claimed as a victory. But as the Mexican forces had retreated to San Luis Potosí, Doniphan thought it safe to send a small body of men with despatches to General Wool begging to be allowed to join Taylor's army and protesting against remaining in Chihuahua "as a mere wagon guard, to garrison a city with troops wholly un-

The volunteer tied the seven bridles together, threw them down, seized his rifle and started off to join the troops in the charge on the breastworks, with the casual remark to those near him: "Hold hell, in a fight! I didn't come here to hold horses—*I can do that at home.*"

[1] Hughes, 334.

fitted for it, and who will be soon wholly ruined by improper indulgences."

Travelling rapidly over the six hundred and seventy-five miles which separated Doniphan from Wool, the party arrived at Saltillo and delivered their despatches on the second of April. A week later the party, reinforced by a company of the Arkansas cavalry, set out on their return, reaching Chihuahua on April 22. Doniphan with his whole force shortly afterward abandoned that city, and, marching steadily and peaceably across the country, reached their destination without molestation. On May 22 the command was reviewed close to the field of Buena Vista by General Wool, who highly complimented them in general orders. Their term of enlistment being now nearly up, the Missouri volunteers were marched from Saltillo to the mouth of the Rio Grande, where they were embarked for New Orleans, and finally reached their homes about the beginning of July.

Doniphan's expedition from Santa Fe to Chihuahua, and thence back to the United States, had, of course, no direct influence upon the course of the war; but indirectly it served to demonstrate two facts: first, the efficiency of American volunteers in marching and fighting, and, second, the apathy of the great mass of the Mexican population. At both El Paso and Chihuahua Doniphan, with a mere handful of men, had occupied populous towns without the least trouble. He had marched for an immense distance on the journey from New Mexico to Saltillo, partly through deserts and partly through well-settled districts, without any opposition except such as he experienced from the organized Mexican forces. He had apparently the hearty good-will of the inhabitants of every locality through which he passed.

The same thing had been already experienced in a remarkable degree by Taylor and Wool. The American authorities had anticipated the possibility of a prolonged guerilla warfare, for which the country they occupied was well adapted, but nothing of the sort was experienced. In the rural districts, as in the cities, the Americans were generally received with kindness, and the people, after recovering from

their natural impulses of fright, were quite ready to supply them with any quantity of provisions and forage. The fact probably was that the great mass of the Mexican population of Indian descent had no national feeling or impulses of patriotism, and looked upon Americans or Spaniards as being very much the same sort of people—incomprehensible, irresistible, stronger than the native races, and made to be silently obeyed. Whatever opposition the Americans experienced during the whole war came, in general, from unwilling forces organized and led by men of Spanish descent.

Doniphan's spectacular success served also to confirm the Mexican hopelessness. Though the Spanish element might characteristically refuse to look the unpleasant fact in the face, and might try to postpone the evil day when they must own they were beaten, yet inevitably, in their hearts, they began to look upon the American soldiery as invincible. The Mexican army, on its part, began to acquire the habit of defeat. In every conflict thus far they had been worsted, and every new disaster must have added to the despairing sense of an inevitable doom. An attack from a new quarter now came, to add to their difficulties.

While General Taylor on the twenty-third and Colonel Doniphan on the twenty-eighth of February were winning their battles at Buena Vista and the Sacramento Pass, General Scott was assembling his forces for the projected attack upon Vera Cruz. His original orders had been intentionally vague and indefinite. He had simply been ordered to repair to Mexico and take command of an expedition to operate on the Gulf coast, and he was told that "it is not proposed to control your operations by definite and positive instructions."[1] The whole subject of the projected expedition had, however, been quite fully discussed verbally, as well as in written memoranda submitted by Scott to Marcy, and the subject was thus very fully understood.

Scott before leaving Washington had made arrangements, through the general staff of the army, to procure surf-boats

[1] Marcy to Scott, Nov. 23, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 372.

to land the troops, to obtain transports, and to have ordnance stores and other supplies in readiness for the expedition; and he informed the Secretary of War that he had, through the general staff of the army, "laid a sufficient basis for the purposes" of the command.

Going by way of New York, and thence by sea, he reached New Orleans on December 19, where he remained for four or five days, continuing his preparations for the forwarding of men and supplies.[1] The troops that were to follow him from Gulf ports were to be collected at Pensacola and New Orleans, and with those sailing from Atlantic ports were to assemble off Lobos Island, a point some time before selected as a rendezvous.[2]

Sailing from New Orleans on the twenty-fourth of December, Scott, while on his journey, wrote to Commodore Conner, then commanding the blockading squadron off Vera Cruz, asking him to study particularly the best location for landing troops on the beach near Vera Cruz, and explaining the plans for a rendezvous of all the army transports under the lee of Lobos Island.[3]

On arriving at the Rio Grande, Scott, as has been already seen, proceeded up the river to Camargo and sent orders for detaching Worth's division, in addition to Twiggs's division of regulars and Patterson's division of volunteers, who were already on the march to Tampico. Returning to Point Isabel, Scott waited in the greatest impatience for the arrival of the transports and the additional volunteers. But everything seemed to him to go wrong. The vessels he had relied upon did not appear, Worth's division did not arrive as early

[1] President Polk thought that Scott at this time was "wasting himself in most extravagant preparations," and making a "parade before the public." "His vanity is such that he could not keep the most important secrets of the Government which were given to him."—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 394.)

[2] Scott to Marcy, Dec. 21 and 23, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 838, 840.

[3] Scott to Conner, Dec. 26, 1846; *ibid.*, 846, 847. The quartermaster-general of the army, writing at the same time to the War Department, said that the anchorage near Lobos Island was perhaps the best on the Gulf—sufficient for a hundred ships, well sheltered from the northers. "The English have used this anchorage for their smuggling operations for more than a century."—(Jesup to Marcy, Dec. 27, 1846; *ibid.*, 508.)

as he had hoped, and two-thirds of the ordnance and ordnance stores and half the surf-boats had not been heard from.

"Perhaps no expedition," he wrote, "was ever so unaccountably delayed—by no want of foresight, arrangement, or energy on my part, as I dare affirm—under circumstances the most critical to this entire army; for every body relied upon, knew from the first, as well as I knew, that it would be fatal for us to attempt military operations on the coast after, probably, the first week in April."[1]

But at last Worth's division arrived (having really marched very rapidly from Saltillo), and Patterson reported his arrival at Tampico accompanied by Twiggs's division on January 23, with Pillow and Quitman close at hand. The total force of Scott's army was then estimated at 13,660 men, including the new volunteers.[2]

On February 15 Scott left the Brazos de Santiago, stopped at Tampico for a day, and arrived off Lobos Island, where he found the anchorage even better than he had anticipated, and perfectly secure against northerly gales. A case of small-pox having been brought down by one of the Pennsylvania regiments of volunteers, the men were landed on the island so as to give an opportunity for ventilating and fumigating the ship, and other troops were also landed and drilled while waiting the arrival of additional men and supplies. A few of the surf-boats were launched and found to be "admirably adapted for the purposes for which they were intended."[3]

While at anchor at Lobos Island General Scott also utilized the time to organize his army. There were to be two divisions of regulars—one under Worth, the other under Twiggs—while the third division, consisting of volunteers, was to be under General Patterson, and was to be divided into three brigades, under Generals Quitman, Pillow, and Shields, respectively.

[1] Scott to Marcy, Feb. 28, 1847; *ibid.*, 807.

[2] Patterson to Scott, Jan. 24, 1847, and memorandum of Adjutant-General H. L. Scott; *ibid.*, 879.

[3] The daily events at Lobos Island during the stay of the troops, from the point of view of a private of a Pennsylvania regiment, will be found related in J. Jacob Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 57–63.

Robert Patterson was a merchant of Philadelphia, a native of Ireland, and was now just fifty-five years old. He was the son of a leader in the unfortunate Irish rebellion of 1798, and had been brought to America as a mere child. When only sixteen years old he was given a commission in the United States army near the close of the War of 1812, where he does not appear to have seen much fighting; and from the close of that war, when his company was disbanded, he was active in the affairs of the Philadelphia militia. He had had no other experience to qualify him for the command of troops. He had, however, been continuously in service on the Rio Grande since the early summer of 1846, receiving and organizing the new troops, and must have acquired some knowledge of military routine.

Of the three volunteer brigadier-generals, Quitman was the only one who had thus far actually been engaged, his brigade having borne an active and efficient part in the capture of Monterey. Gideon J. Pillow has already figured in this book as the chairman of the Tennessee delegation to the Democratic convention which nominated Polk. Having succeeded unexpectedly well in that command, he was appointed brigadier-general in July, 1846, and was sent at first to the Rio Grande; but he saw no active service until Vera Cruz. James Shields, the third brigadier-general, was born in Ireland in 1810, and came to the United States when he was sixteen. He practised law and politics at Kankakee, became a judge of the Supreme Court of Illinois, and later was appointed commissioner of the general land office in Washington when the Democrats came in. He was appointed a brigadier-general as of July 1, 1846, and he also saw no active service until he joined Scott.

Pillow's brigade consisted of the first and second Tennessee, the first and second Pennsylvania regiments, and one battery of artillery. Quitman's brigade was made up of the South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama regiments; and Shields's of one New York and two Illinois regiments. Only the first Tennessee had ever been in battle.

During the ten days that Scott lay at Lobos Island, chafing

against unlooked-for delays, and fearing that he might yet lose the race against time with yellow-fever at Vera Cruz, the greater part of his transports and supply-ships were arriving one by one, all too slowly for his impatient spirit. But at last almost all his men and the chief part of his stores and equipment were assembled, and on the second of March he set sail for the anchorage off Vera Cruz.

Outside of that harbor lie seven distinct coral reefs forming a rough semicircle, some of them just awash at high-water and some of them rising to form low, sandy islands, in the lee of which vessels may lie at anchor with some safety during northerly gales. The outermost island—Verde, or Green Island—is about three miles due east of the harbor; while about three miles southeast from the harbor and a mile off the beach, lies the desolate island of Sacrificios. It derived its name from the fact that Juan de Grijalva, when he first visited this coast, in 1518, found on the island vestiges of human sacrifice.[1]

Further down the coast, at a distance of some twelve miles from Vera Cruz, the island of Salmedina and a number of reefs lying to the eastward of it afford another passable anchorage near the beach, just opposite the small village of Anton Lizardo.

On the afternoon of Friday, March 5, the United States ship *Potomac*, one of the blockading fleet off Vera Cruz, was lying at anchor under the lee of Green Island in a moderate norther when, as one of her officers related,

"the man at the mast-head reported a sail to the Northward, and soon after we saw the long expected fleet coming down before the wind. What number of vessels were there I do not know, but there were more than we could count—the little brig *Porpoise* under her very efficient commander Lieutenant William E. Hunt, gallantly led the way. The first thing that excited our astonishment was the great amount of sail carried by the transports, and the next the skillful manner in which their captains threaded their way between the reefs! But as one of them remarked to me afterwards, 'any one could see the channel in a gale of wind'; meaning that the breakers on the reefs would show the deep water. No words can express our excitement as

[1] Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, I, 227.

ship after ship, crowded with enthusiastic soldiers, successively came in; some anchoring near us, and others continuing on for the anchorage at Anton Lizardo. We had been so long on board our ships, and for some months so inactive, that we were longing for something to do. I cannot answer for others, but the scene of that day is so vivid, and the events so firmly fixed in my memory, that I can almost *see* the ship *Diadem* as she *grazed* our spanker-boom in her desire to pass near enough to speak us."[1]

Before leaving Lobos Island Scott had issued most detailed orders as to signals and ships, and as to the method of effecting a landing with the surf-boats. Further orders provided for the landing of intrenching tools and quartermasters' stores, the detailing of working parties, the methods of conducting a siege, and other particulars in relation to the debarkation of troops and supplies.[2] All was therefore in readiness the moment Scott arrived, and there remained only his decision as to the precise point of landing.

On Sunday, March 7, Scott and Conner, accompanied by the general officers and the principal members of Scott's staff, made a reconnoissance of Vera Cruz and its surroundings from on board the little steamer *Petrita*, with the result that it was agreed the landing should be made on the beach opposite the island of Sacrificios, under the lee of which American and foreign men-of-war generally anchored. The anchorage, however, was too cramped to allow all the transports to lie there in safety, and it was therefore decided to transfer the troops from the transports to the American naval vessels, and land from them. Scott accordingly issued his final orders directing the landing on the following day, Monday; but that day a gale of wind was blowing which

[1] Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 82. Commodore Conner, on Feb. 27, had given orders to Captain Aulick, of the *Potomac*, to anchor under Green Island awaiting Scott's transports, and to send an officer on each vessel as she arrived to pilot her in, or, "should more vessels arrive at the same time than you have officers to take charge of, you will give the masters such sailing directions as will enable them to make the passage between the Blanquilla Reef and Point Anton Lizardo."—(Conner to Aulick, Feb. 27, 1847; Conner's *Home Squadron*, 80.) There appears to be some confusion as to the date of the arrival of Scott's fleet. Conner, in his despatch to the Secretary of the Navy on March 7, gives the date of arrival as March 5, which from other circumstances appears to be correct.

[2] See general orders 27, 28, 34, 40–43; Conner's *Home Squadron*, 72–77.

prevented the operation, and it was postponed until the following afternoon. At daylight on Tuesday morning the transfer of the troops from the transports to the naval vessels began, and by noon, or shortly afterward, all the naval force, with Scott's troops on board, was at anchor opposite the point designated for debarkation.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the signal was made for the first detachment of troops, consisting of Worth's division of regulars, to prepare to land. In a few minutes the troops had entered the surf-boats, which were to be rowed by seamen from the naval vessels, and all was in readiness. Each boat carried forty or fifty soldiers fully armed.

The scene must have been exciting and exhilarating in the highest degree as, under the brilliant tropical sun, the boats rowed over a perfectly smooth sea toward the beach. Two small steamers and four schooners, all of light draught, were shelling the sand-hills back of the beach. Three foreign men-of-war—English, French, and Spanish—at anchor under Sacrificios, were witnesses to the excellent arrangement and good order with which the American army conducted the hazardous attempt; and the American naval vessels at hand also testified their interest, with their crowds of soldiers and seamen who watched from deck or rigging the approach of the boats toward the silent and apparently deserted shore.

Scott fully anticipated a vigorous opposition. He believed—which was not quite accurate—that the castle of Ulúa had been "greatly extended—almost rebuilt, and its armament about doubled"—and that it had the capacity to sink the entire American navy.[1] He also still believed that Santa Anna would concentrate against him, and not against Taylor; for it was not so apparent then as it was to critics later that Santa Anna must inevitably march on Saltillo and Monterey. Being therefore ignorant, as Scott wrote,

"of President Santa Anna's desperate march over the desert, upon Major-General Taylor, we did not doubt meeting at our landing the most formidable struggle of the war. No precaution therefore was neglected."

[1] Scott's *Autobiography*, 422.

General Worth, in a fast-rowing boat, personally led the way, and was the first man ashore. As the heavy surf-boats grounded on the beach the men jumped out, waded to dry land, formed rapidly in line at the edge of the water, and with a simultaneous rush and shout the whole division ascended the nearest sand-dunes, in full expectation of a hostile reception. To their surprise, and the surprise of all onlookers, not a shot was fired; and as the American line crowned the summits of the sand-hills the men aboard all the ships in the neighborhood cheered again and again at the success of the landing party.

Worth's division was followed immediately by the volunteers under Patterson, and they by Twiggs's division of regulars; and by ten o'clock that night practically the whole force of Scott's army—about twelve thousand men, with rations for two days—some horses and some field artillery, were safely on shore.[1]

During the night a party of Mexican infantry fired upon Worth's pickets, but otherwise there was no attempt to molest the invaders. The next morning Scott himself landed, and from that time on, the troops and the men from the naval vessels and transports were busily engaged, as the weather permitted, in landing siege-guns, ammunition, and supplies for the use of the army.

Worth's division invested the city, beginning at a high sand-hill near the beach and extending thence northwesterly toward the interior, forming the right of the American line. Next to it came Patterson's division forming the centre of the line, while Twiggs's division marched around beyond Patterson, ultimately occupying the small village of Vergara, on the sea-shore north of the city, thus completing its investment from the land-side.

[1] Much the best account of the landing operations is contained in a "Memoir of the Landing of the United States Troops at Vera Cruz in 1847," by the late Admiral W. G. Temple (then a passed midshipman), which is printed in Conner's *Home Squadron*, together with all the naval and military orders, pp. 58–83. Other reports of eye-witnesses will be found in Scott's report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 216; Commodore Conner's report, H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1177–1179; Parker, 83; Semmes, 125, 128; *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 145–150.

In the ensuing operations the land fortifications bore the whole burden of the defence of the city. These remained very much in the same state in which they had been at the time of the French attack, in 1838. They consisted of a series of small bastions and redans, solidly built and capable of mounting from eight to ten guns each. The curtains by which they were connected consisted of a "thin wall, proof only against musketry and of but little use." None of the defences were protected by ditches, as the shifting sands which surrounded the city on all sides would soon have filled any ditch in the event of a heavy gale.

The country lying between the walls of the city and the American camps was generally a level sandy plain, bounded by high sand-hills that rose at a distance from the city, which varied from about a thousand yards on the south and east to nearly two miles on the north. The valleys between the hills were filled with a thorny underbrush.[1]

The question as to the mode of attack had not been fully determined when the American troops first landed. Scott states that his own opinion from the first was that the castle of Ulúa should be captured under the shelter of and through the city; but whether the city should be taken by a regular siege or by an assault remained open. After a conference with his staff, Scott determined upon a siege, and batteries were accordingly established, under the direction of his engineers, as rapidly as possible. The work, however, was greatly retarded by a constant succession of the northers which habitually blow with such violence off Vera Cruz during six months of the year as to make any landing on the beach impracticable during their continuance. However, the toilsome work was in time accomplished, the task being made doubly difficult by the necessity of moving guns and supplies through the blowing sand, which, during the prevalence of gales, added enormously to the discomforts of the troops in their improvised camps. But at length, after more than ten days' hard work, trenches had been dug and platforms for some of the guns had been erected, and on March

[1] Ripley, II, 19.

22 Scott summoned the Mexican commander to surrender the city.

The total force in the city, according to Mexican accounts, consisted of 3,360 men. It was made up of small detachments of various regiments of the line, artillerists, and men belonging to the Mexican navy—about 700 in all; of the battalions of Oaxaca and Tehuantepec, numbering 460; and about 2,200 "national guards" from Vera Cruz itself, Puebla, and other places near by. The castle of Ulúa was garrisoned by 450 artillerists and by 630 men from the battalions of Puebla, Jamiltepec, Tampico, Tuxpan, and Alvarado—in all 1,030 men. Thus the garrisons of city and castle amounted in all to 4,390; but whether this figure included commissioned officers does not appear. The city defences mounted 89 pieces of artillery (including mortars) of various calibres and ages, while the castle had 135 guns and mortars, mostly of heavy metal. Both were well supplied with ammunition.

The general in command of both city and castle was Juan Morales, who had conducted an unsuccessful campaign in Yucatan five years before. Under him General José Juan Landero was in command of the city, General José Duran of the castle, and Lieutenant-Colonel Manuel Robles Pezuela was chief of engineers. The latter, it seems, had urged the importance of throwing up outlying defensive works, which, he believed, would serve to delay the invaders a fortnight; but Morales was unwilling to risk diminishing his scanty force, and contented himself with opposing and delaying Scott's preparations by a distant cannonade from the city's walls.[1]

In reply to Scott's demand for a surrender, Morales wrote that the city and castle of Ulúa would be defended at all cost, to effect which he "counted upon the necessary elements," and that he would make it good to the last. Scott immediately opened fire upon the city from seven mortars, and at the same time some of the lighter vessels of the Ameri-

[1] Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 157–160; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 154.

can squadron also shelled the city from a position close in to the beach, where they were partly protected from the castle. Arrangements had previously been made with the naval commanders to land six heavy guns, which were placed in position about the centre of the American lines soon after the army batteries opened, and were manned and worked with great efficiency by detachments of seamen from the squadron.

For four days an almost unremitting fire from the American batteries was kept up, which was vigorously replied to by the Mexican artillery. The loss of life among the combatants on both sides was small; but great damage was done to the city itself, practicable breaches were made in the walls, and a number of non-combatants were killed or wounded. On the morning of March 26 proposals of surrender were received from General Landero, to whom General Morales, in accordance with a not uncommon Spanish practice, had turned over the command under a pretext of ill-health.[1]

While the siege was thus progressing some Mexican cavalry and rancheros in the neighborhood had timidly and ineffectively tried to annoy the American camps. Shots had been nightly fired, which had cost the American soldiers a vexatious loss of sleep, but only two serious skirmishes had occurred. The first was with a detachment of the mounted rifles (of which Persifor F. Smith had been appointed colonel) forming a part of Twiggs's division. This detachment found several hundred Mexicans intrenched among the sand-hills on the road to the city of Mexico, at a point about two miles and a half from Vergara. The Americans at once deployed to the right and left of the road, outflanking the Mexicans in both directions, and advanced. The Mexicans made no stand, but incontinently abandoned their posi-

[1] The official reports of the siege operations from the American commanders are in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 216–255; H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1187–1192. Accounts by eye-witnesses will be found in *Autobiography of an American Soldier*, 145–166; *Reminiscences of a Campaign in Mexico*, 214–233; Bonbury, 82–84; Semmes, 128–141; Parker, 79–102; Wilcox, 242–262; Oswandel, 67–102; Meade, I, 191–193, and Anderson, *An Artillery Officer in the Mexican War*, 65–105. See also Ripley, II, 19–82; Ros Bárcena, 153–193; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 151–167.

tion, and were pursued for about a mile, with apparently slight loss on either side.[1]

On the next day, March 25, a party of the second dragoons, under Colonel Harney, were sent out by Scott's orders to disperse a Mexican force which was reported to be encamped on the Medellin River, south of Vera Cruz. Harney met with no opposition until he came near a stone bridge across the river, which he was informed was fortified and guarded by two thousand men and two pieces of artillery. He thereupon halted and sent forward skirmishers toward the bridge. The Mexicans, on the other side of the stream, opened a musketry fire, and Harney, seeing that the bridge was in fact fortified, sent back to camp for two pieces of artillery which shortly after arrived, accompanied by a number of dismounted dragoons and parts of the first and second Tennessee volunteers. After six or eight rounds from the guns, the infantry and the dismounted dragoons carried the bridge, whereupon the mounted men who had been held in reserve came up and pursued and completely dispersed the enemy. The pursuit was continued beyond the village of Medellin, six miles from the bridge; and Harney's command returned to camp early on the morning of March 27, having lost two men killed and nine wounded. "It is not ascertained precisely," Harney reported, "what number of the enemy was killed; but it is known that not less than fifty fell in the attack and subsequent pursuit."[2]

Scott, when he received General Landero's proposals of surrender, had been planning an assault upon the city, and he very readily agreed to the suggestion to appoint three commissioners to treat for terms of accommodation. His first demand was that the whole garrison should be surrendered as prisoners of war, but after two days of discussion it was finally agreed that they should be permitted to march out with the honors of war, to lay down their arms outside the city, and to return home on parole not to serve

[1] Report of Colonel Smith; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 249–250. Maury, *Recollections of a Virginian*, 33.

[2] Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 250.

again until duly exchanged. In accordance with a special request of the Mexicans, Scott not only guaranteed protection to the inhabitants of the city and their property, but also that there should be absolute freedom of religious worship and ceremonies. On the morning of Monday, March 29, the American troops took possession of the city of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan de Ulúa.[1]

What the total Mexican losses were is not known. The Mexican historians put them at "over six hundred," of whom four hundred were killed; but these figures must be grossly exaggerated. The American loss, in an army of about twelve thousand men, was twelve killed and forty-nine wounded. The navy lost seven men killed and eight wounded, the naval battery being specially exposed.

Scott's conduct of the military operations was beyond criticism, but the Mexican defence had been marked by almost incredible ineptitude. The obvious measure of opposing the first landing of troops on the beach had been totally neglected. The landing was effected in full sight of the city and castle, so that, with the slightest energy on the part of Morales and his men, a formidable force might readily have been placed in shelter on the sand-hills to open fire upon the boats as they approached the beach, and might have inflicted the most severe losses upon the landing party before they reached the shore. Such losses would not only have greatly weakened Scott in point of numbers, but would have seriously impaired the morale of the besieging army, even if they had managed to get ashore at all to begin operations.

Morales, also, before the siege was in command of a body of regular cavalry and rancheros who were respectable—at least in point of numbers. These men, if skilfully and boldly

[1] *Ibid.*, 229–238. A striking picture of the scene as the Mexican troops laid down their arms and marched out with their women and children will be found in Semmes, 146. A naval officer who was in the first boat to land at the castle of San Juan says: "It was certainly the filthiest place I had ever been in; and as for *smells* the city of Cologne itself could not surpass them."—(Parker, 101.) How far the Mexican troops observed their parole is not very clear. Ros Bárcena in his *Invasion Norte-Americana* says that the government more or less directly compelled the men who had surrendered to continue in service (p. 187).

handled, could unquestionably have greatly impeded Scott's troops' toilsome march through the sand around the city, and could have kept the camps in a constant state of alarm; but as a matter of fact they did nothing.

However, the harbor of Vera Cruz had now been secured, and preparations for holding it as a base of supplies and for beginning an advance into the interior of the country were actively pursued.

"The harbor became thenceforth crowded with vessels; some under contract with the government, and some pushing their fortunes in the way of trade. European vessels began to come in also, on speculation, and probably, Vera Cruz, never before, presented such a spectacle of mingled thrift and warlike preparation. . . . The reef of the Gallega, on which the proud old castle of San Juan de Ulua had alternately slumbered in lordly repose, and awakened the echoes of war, for so many generations past, was degraded into a coal depot for steamers; a substantial wharf of newly-sawed timber having been extended from it into the harbor, for the convenience of discharging and receiving the materiel. Sheds and wharves, for a similar purpose, had been constructed, also, at the island of Sacrificios. The channels of the harbor were marked out and buoyed, and pilot boats from the Chesapeake might be seen daily cruising many miles out at sea, to pick up in-ward bound vessels. Forges, and other workshops for the squadron were erected on Green Island, and a commodious hospital already loomed up from the little sand key of Salmedina at Anton Lizardo. Not the least of the improvements which had been made in the city, was the total revolution which had taken place in the custom house. The eighty or ninety Mexican officials, who had formerly occupied this building, had, of course, vacated their posts, and our friend Dimond, the former consul of the port, with half a dozen assistants, now performed the increased duties of collection, with a simplicity and rapidity that astonish those that had been accustomed to the cumbersome machinery of the defunct government."[1]

While the tedious preliminaries of preparing for an advance were going on, the navy, under Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who had relieved Commodore Conner, again began the task of reducing the small towns lying along the Gulf. The first to be attacked was Alvarado, about thirty miles from Vera Cruz, which the squadron had twice attempted

[1] Semmes, 149.

in vain to capture.[1] A detachment from the army under General Quitman was sent along the beach to co-operate with the navy, but on arrival at the mouth of the river they found that the fort, as well as the towns higher up, had already surrendered to the United States steamer *Scourge*.

A few days later Commodore Perry undertook with his naval forces to capture the town of Tuxpan, lying about half-way between Vera Cruz and Tampico. He started on April 12 from Vera Cruz with the steam-vessels in his squadron, having sent his sailing vessels a few days beforehand to meet him at Lobos Island, where the whole fleet concentrated on the seventeenth. The next morning the small vessels of the squadron were towed up the river to attack the forts, which were under command of General Cos, the hero who had defended San Antonio against the Texans in 1835. As the flotilla approached the first of the forts, about a mile and a half below the town, the rowing boats were run ashore, and the men in them jumped out and carried the fort in an instant. The remaining forts higher up the river were in like manner carried by assault, the town was taken, and a custom-house established.[2]

The American forces, therefore, now held at their mercy the whole Gulf coast of Mexico, including its one reasonably good harbor—that of Vera Cruz—and were henceforth able, through their undisputed command of the sea, to land and supply troops in such number as they might think advisable.

[1] Conner's want of success at Alvarado was thought by many men in the navy to be due to his lack of dash and enterprise—the consequence perhaps of continued ill-health. He was a great sufferer from neuralgia. It is, however, very doubtful whether any one could have done any better, considering the imperfect means at his command. See Conner's *Home Squadron;* Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, I, 603.

[2] See reports of Commodore Perry in H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1192–1203.

# CHAPTER XLII

## CERRO GORDO

SANTA ANNA and his men, as they retreated after the battle of Buena Vista, reached the neighborhood of San Luis Potosí by the ninth of March, and there they were met by accounts of the recent outbreak of the clerical party against the established government. As it was evident that the time had come when Santa Anna must declare himself and intervene in the contest between the factions, which was paralyzing the government throughout the country, he started out, after a very short delay, upon his journey of something over three hundred miles to the capital.

From the remnants of his shattered army and the garrison that had been left behind in San Luis, Santa Anna was able to organize a body of troops fit for service, composed of four battalions of light infantry, two battalions of the line, two batteries of artillery, and some squadrons of cavalry. The infantry, amounting to about four thousand men, was organized in two brigades under the command of Generals Ciriaco Vasquez and Pedro Ampudia, respectively, while the cavalry was under General Julian Juvera. This force, numbering in all 5,650, was ordered to march in the direction of the capital, and it started from San Luis about the fifteenth of March. Santa Anna's favorite regiment of hussars was selected to escort the general-in-chief to the city of Mexico, and General Mora y Villamil was left at San Luis, in command of the remnants of the army, with orders to reorganize them, and make up what was to be called the Army of the North.[1]

Travelling rapidly, Santa Anna with his cavalry escort

[1] Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 105.

reached the suburb of Guadalupe Hidalgo on the twentieth of March and announced that he would not enter the city of Mexico itself until order was restored. He had been met on his way at various points south of Querétaro by numbers of persons of both parties who had come to lay their case before him in the hope of enlisting his aid; and he appears to have been inclined at first to support the anti-clerical cause. But as he approached the capital his views seem to have changed, yet he prudently remained silent, and gave very little intimation of what his real intentions were.

On March 21, 1847, after considerable discussion over the propriety of the step, Congress determined that as Santa Anna would not come to the city, they would send a committee of members of both houses to meet him, and receive his oath of office as President of the republic at Guadalupe Hidalgo.[1] The committee immediately set out, and Santa Anna was duly sworn in.

On the next day the ministers, accompanied by a committee of the anti-clericals, also went to meet the President and congratulate him in the name of the government; but if these gentlemen expected that Santa Anna would declare himself upon their side they were very speedily undeceived. It is quite probable that his private and personal sympathies were in favor of the *puros*, but all he could do was to secure for them a safe and honorable retreat from the impossible position in which they were now placed, in consequence of the all but universal opposition to Farias and his plans.

Another committee which went out from the city of Mexico to visit Santa Anna was made up of members of the cathedral chapter, with whom Santa Anna appears to have been very non-committal indeed. Certainly he gave them no positive assurances at that time of what he would be willing to do. Some of the more extreme of the clerical party were for continuing the existing struggle in the streets of Mexico —if struggle it may be called where there was a great deal of shooting but no real fighting—unless Santa Anna would accede to their views. But milder counsels prevailed, and

[1] Decree of March 21, 1847; Dublan y Lozano, V, 262.

in spite of the prohibitions of the Council of Trent a compromise was finally agreed to by which, in consideration of two million dollars in cash, Santa Anna was to procure the repeal of the obnoxious laws of January 11 and February 4.

The next thing was for Santa Anna to carry out this bargain, which was by no means a simple thing to do. Both factions were easily persuaded to lay down their arms, so that ostensibly peace prevailed for the moment in the city of Mexico; but Farias remained in office as Vice-President, and, as it was thought essential for Santa Anna to leave the capital to go out to meet Scott and the invading armies, he would have to leave Farias again at the head of the executive. But to get rid of Farias was a prerequisite to getting any form of government established that could carry on the business of the country, and Farias persistently refused to resign. For several days violent discussions followed as to the means of getting rid of him.

In the meantime a new cabinet was made up, with Manuel Baranda as Minister of Relations at its head; and with the aid of this ministry the question of raising money for the use of the army was again brought forward in Congress. Santa Anna had asked for and obtained the passage of an act which gave him extraordinary powers to raise twenty million dollars, but it was provided that he was not to alienate national territory in whole or in part, to impose forced loans, to make contracts of colonization, to seize private property, or to take possession of church property by virtue of the second article of the law of January 11.

The third article of the statute provided as follows:

"The executive shall also be empowered to enter into agreements with the persons and corporations who were affected by the laws of December 30th, January 11th and February 4th last, passed with the object of procuring money for the government; and shall also have power to decree the repeal of these laws, if he shall deem it expedient."[1]

The power to repeal the anti-clerical laws having thus been put into Santa Anna's hands, while at the same time he

[1] Law of March 28, 1847; *ibid.*, 262.

was empowered to raise the amount to be levied on the church from fifteen to twenty millions, the bargain with the church authorities was quickly carried through. On the day after the passage of the law just cited Santa Anna issued a decree reciting the terms of the law of March 28, and expressly repealing the law of January 11 and the various regulations resulting from it;[1] and thus ended, for the time being, the controversy over the secularisation of church property, to be renewed several years later on a larger scale.

The next measure to be adopted was the one removing Farias from office. This was accomplished by the passage of a short act which amended the Constitution by abolishing the office of Vice-President, and which provided that in the absence of the President in command of the army a substitute President should be named by Congress, who should hold office only until the President's return.[2]

On the day after the passage of this law the election of the substitute took place. The choice fell upon Brigadier-General Pedro María Anaya, a rather inconspicuous supporter of General Santa Anna, who had held office as minister of War under the brief Presidency of Herrera.

At two o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, April 2, 1847, Santa Anna, having thus completed his business, left the city of Mexico to proceed to the front.

"Baranda tells me," recorded a resident of the city, "that the scene was extremely pathetic and that all the circumstances were extremely moving. It was as though it were the death of a deity, and he saw tears flowing even from the enemies of Santa Anna. The latter expressed sad presentiments. The reason for this haste is that he may arrive in time to occupy the position of La Joya, so as to fortify it and delay the march of the Americans."[3]

[1] Decree of March 29, 1847; *ibid.*, 263.

[2] Law of April 1, 1847; *ibid.*, 264.

[3] The foregoing account of Santa Anna's course in settling the difficulties in the city of Mexico upon his return after the battle of Buena Vista is taken from García's *Documentos Inéditos* (*México Durante su Guerra con los E. U.*), III, 208–218. This part of the work consists of a long letter written by J. F. Ramírez to F. Elorriaga, dated April 2, 1847, with a postscript dated April 3, forming together a contemporary account of the highest value. Ramírez was in a position to know very fully what was going on behind the scenes.

Santa Anna reached his hacienda of El Encero, about seven or eight miles east of Jalapa, on April 5, and for the next few days busied himself in giving instructions for occupying and fortifying a suitable position in which to await Scott's attack. It had been his first intention to make a stand at the pass of La Joya, a narrow defile a few miles west of Jalapa, but on a further examination of the ground he determined to intrench the pass of Cerro Gordo, twenty miles east of Jalapa.

The high-road which ran from Vera Cruz in a generally westerly direction reached, near this point, the first foot-hills of the tremendous range of mountains which forms the easterly boundary of the great central plateau of Mexico. At a small village known as Plan del Rio, the road turned abruptly northward, and crossed a little stream known as the Rio del Plan over a fine stone bridge thrown across upon a single arch, and then began the long ascent to Jalapa, which lies nearly three thousand feet above the sea. Running at first northwardly, the road crossed by a zigzag a ridge of hills, and then turned and ran northwesterly for about a mile and a half through a hilly country, when it turned again sharply to the southwest, until it regained the bank of the river at a point nearly three miles above the bridge, the stream at this part of its course running through a deep and precipitous cañon.

The road therefore, for about three miles above the bridge, formed, roughly speaking, an arc of a circle, of which the river—flowing nearly east and west—formed the chord. In the space between chord and arc, and close to the river, there are a number of steep hills which were covered for the most part with a dense and thorny chaparral. West of the point where the road first reached the river, after crossing the bridge at Plan del Rio, and dominating all the surrounding hills, is a very steep, isolated, conical mountain known as Cerro Gordo (thick ridge); and the road as it ran along the eastern base of this hill, and between it and the hills near the river, traversed a savage defile that formed the pass of Cerro Gordo.

Northeasterly from the hill of Cerro Gordo, and a little less than half a mile from it, is another and somewhat lower hill, to which the Mexicans gave the name of Atalaya, and which the Americans erroneously called El Telégrafo.[1]

About three-quarters of a mile west of the pass, and upon a level space of ground near the river bank, was a group of farm buildings known as the ranchería of Cerro Gordo, and upon this level spot Santa Anna established his principal camp. Before leaving the capital he had sent orders to the division under Vasques, which was following him from San Luis Potosí, directing them to turn off from the road leading to the city of Mexico and to march in the direction of Perote and Jalapa. He also sent forward the garrisons of Mexico and Puebla, and he was further reinforced by local militia from various points in the neighborhood. By the twelfth of April the concentration had practically been effected, although one brigade did not arrive at the camp until the battle of Cerro Gordo was over. He had also ordered the cavalry, under General Canalizo, the military commander of the state of Vera Cruz, to oppose Scott's advance at the National Bridge, about fifteen miles east of Plan del Rio, where the road from Vera Cruz crossed the river Antigua; but Canalizo abandoned the National Bridge two or three days before any of Scott's troops appeared.

The extreme right of Santa Anna's line near Cerro Gordo was formed by the hills close to the river, which terminated on their easterly slopes by three heights or promontories, extending like three open fingers of one hand, with deep valleys between them, and near the top of these three promontories were placed three batteries, mounting in all seventeen guns. The two batteries nearest the river commanded the approach along the line of an old and abandoned road which formerly led from Plan del Rio toward Jalapa, while the third battery, the furthest from the river, enfiladed the high-road where it ran in its southwesterly course toward the

[1] The hill of Cerro Gordo, which had an old watch-tower on it, was the one really known as El Telégrafo, though that name seems not to have been in general use.

river. Santa Anna's staff regarded the [illegible] each as the only ones possible for the advance of the American troops, and consequently the [illegible] were strengthened in every [illegible] nineteen hundred men. The [illegible] was under command of Gen[illegible]zo, the regiment of the line, [illegible] other two batteries [illegible] ous towns, [illegible] guards; while [illegible] of Matamoras [illegible] reserve [illegible]

[illegible] Cerro Gordo [illegible] the [illegible] west to [illegible] eight guns [illegible] and almost [illegible] thrown [illegible] road, so as [illegible] ments on [illegible] road were [illegible] grenadiers [illegible] men in all— [illegible] la Vera Cruz, who had been taken [illegible] and had re-[illegible]

[illegible]'s line was the key of Cerro Gordo [illegible] dominated the [illegible] well as all the [illegible] The [illegible] the top was felled [illegible] near the summit, [illegible] on the slopes and [illegible] ments were thrown up [illegible] abattis. This battery was [illegible] a line regiment of infantry, the [illegible] under the command of General Ciriaco Vasquez, whose [illegible] had [illegible] the weary march from Buena Vista by way of [illegible], Querétaro, and Perote.

[1] The hill of Cerro Gordo, which had an old watch-tower on it, was also commonly known as El Telégrafo, though this name seems not to have been in general use.

river. Santa Anna's staff regarded these means of approach as the only ones possible for the advance of the North American troops, and consequently the three batteries referred to were strengthened in every possible way and manned by nineteen hundred men. The battery on the extreme right was under command of General Pinzon, who had the fifth regiment of the line and the battalion of Atlixco. The other two batteries were supported by battalions from various towns, besides about six hundred and fifty local national guards; while the reserve was composed of the battalions of Matamoros and Tepeaca. These two batteries and the reserve were under the command of General Jarero.

Between the hills near the river and the height of Cerro Gordo another battery was erected upon the road at the summit of the pass, and near where the road turned west to follow the course of the river. At this point were eight guns commanding the road itself, while south of it, and almost parallel to the road, an intrenchment for infantry was thrown up and a covered way was formed along the old road, so as to protect the troops in passing from the intrenchments on the road to the batteries upon the hills. On the road were the sixth infantry of the line and a battalion of "grenadiers of the guard"—thirteen hundred and sixty men in all—under General Rómulo Diaz de la Vega, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Resaca de la Palma, and had recently been exchanged.

The centre of Santa Anna's line was the hill of Cerro Gordo itself, which, as already stated, completely dominated the pass through which the highway ran, as well as all the neighboring heights. The timber near the top was felled and a battery of six light guns established near the summit, protected by a rough stone-wall, while on the slopes and near the bottom of the hill intrenchments were thrown up and trees were felled to form an abattis. This battery was supported by a hundred men of a line regiment of infantry, the post being under the command of General Ciriaco Vasquez, whose division had just completed the weary march from Buena Vista by way of San Luis, Querétaro, and Perote.

On the extreme left of the Mexican line—a line about a mile and a half in length and forming a curve convex to the north—Santa Anna's remaining troops were placed in position. They consisted of four battalions of light infantry, two regiments of infantry of the line, all the cavalry, and a field-battery. Forage and provisions were abundant, and the camp was supplied with water by means of a ditch which Santa Anna caused to be constructed from his hacienda of El Encero, about seven miles up the river.[1]

In this strong position Santa Anna and his men awaited the arrival of the American army on its march from Vera Cruz toward the capital.

"An army landing on a hostile coast," says an accomplished military critic, "has to endure a certain period of inactivity. Under ordinary circumstances, as at Vera Cruz, the process of disembarking men is rapidly accomplished. The field-guns follow with but little delay, and a certain proportion of cavalry becomes early available. But the disembarkation of the impedimenta—the stores, waggons, hospitals, ammunition, and transport animals—even where ample facilities exist, demands far more time than the disembarkation of the fighting force. In the present case, as all the animals had to be requisitioned in the country, it was not till the middle of April that supplies and transport sufficient to warrant further movement had been accumulated."[2]

Scott, however, in his anxiety to avoid the dangers of yellow-fever on the sea-coast, prepared to move inland at the earliest possible moment, and on April 6, a week after the surrender of Vera Cruz, issued orders for the advance of a large part of his army. The second division of regulars, under General Twiggs, was directed to start on April 8, and was to be followed twenty-four hours later by General Patterson with two brigades of the division of volunteers. The whole of Worth's division of regulars and one of Patterson's three brigades were to be left in the vicinity of Vera Cruz,

[1] Near the rancheria of Cerro Gordo there were some paths running down to the river several hundred feet below; but they were so steep and difficult that it would have been impossible to get an adequate supply of water for the troops by carrying it up on muleback.

[2] Colonel Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson*, I, 38.

to await further means of transportation; as also the Tennessee cavalry (dismounted), until the arrival of their horses from the United States. Three field-batteries and two squadrons of the second dragoons were to accompany the advance detachment, which was also to have with it a supply train amounting to upward of two hundred wagons.[1]

On April 11 Twiggs reported from the National Bridge that Santa Anna was certainly at Jalapa or its vicinity, but that he could not determine what the strength of the Mexican force really was. It was variously stated at between two thousand and thirteen thousand men, and it seemed to be certain "that the pass between this and Jalapa will be disputed." Twiggs expected to reach Plan del Rio that evening, and he had no doubt that he would reach Jalapa with his command.[2] Writing the same day to the War Department, Scott stated that he thought Twiggs (from whom he had not yet heard) "must now be near Jalapa"; that rumors were prevalent that Santa Anna had arrived at Jalapa with a force of six thousand men, but it was not believed in Vera Cruz that it amounted to half that number, and Scott thought that no conflict was to be expected before reaching Jalapa.[3]

After an extremely hot and toilsome march, which seems to have been unduly rapid for heavily burdened men through the sandy though generally level district of the Tierra Caliente, the head of Twiggs's division arrived at Plan del Rio at about noon on Sunday, the eleventh of April, where a party of Mexican lancers was seen. These quickly retired, and Twiggs spent the next two days in reconnoitring the enemy's position, the great strength of which soon became apparent to every man in his division.[4] He made up his mind, nevertheless, to carry the hills south of the highway by a direct frontal attack early on Wednesday morning, April 14; but

[1] General orders No. 94, April 6, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 921.
[2] Twiggs to Scott, April 11, 1847; *ibid.*, 939.
[3] Scott to Marcy, April 11, 1847; *ibid.*, 928.
[4] *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 167–172. During these reconnoissances Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, of the engineers, was very severely wounded under the Mexican works near the river.

by that time General Patterson had come up with the volunteer division, and by virtue of his rank as major-general took command of the whole force and issued an order suspending further operations until the arrival of General Scott.[1]

About noon on April 14 Scott arrived at Plan del Rio, and extensive reconnoissances were at once begun by two very competent young officers, Lieutenant P. T. Beauregard and Captain Robert E. Lee. The detailed examination of the ground by the engineers revealed the almost impregnable nature of Santa Anna's position near the river; but it was also Lee's opinion that by leaving the high-road near the point where it turned southwesterly a path could be made for some distance along a ravine parallel to the river, which would completely turn the left of Santa Anna's position.

Scott resolved, therefore, "to turn the enemy's left and attack in rear, while menacing or engaging his front"; and in accordance with this decision general orders were issued at Plan del Rio on Saturday, April 17, announcing that the enemy's whole line of intrenchments and batteries would be attacked in front, and at the same time turned, early on the following day. Twiggs's division, reinforced by two volunteer regiments under General Shields, was directed to move forward before daylight from the position it then occupied, and take up a position across the national road in the enemy's rear, so as to cut off a retreat toward Jalapa. Worth's division of regulars was to start at sunrise on Sunday morning, to follow Twiggs's movement against the enemy's left. Pillow's brigade was to be ready—

"as soon as he hears the report of arms on our right, or sooner, if circumstances should favor him, to pierce the enemy's line of batteries at such point—the nearer to the river the better—as he may select Once in the rear of that line, he will turn to the right or left, or both, and attack the batteries in reverse, or, if abandoned, he will pursue the enemy with vigor until further orders."

[1] Patterson was ill at the time, and a few days after this was obliged to return home on leave. He reached Washington by the eleventh of June, and gave the President much interesting news from the army.—(Polk's *Diary*, III, 58 *et seq.*). Patterson saw no further fighting.

One field-battery and all the cavalry were to be held in reserve on the national road, a little out of view and range of the enemy's batteries.

"The enemy's batteries being carried or abandoned, all our divisions and corps will pursue with vigor. This pursuit may be continued many miles, until stopped by darkness or fortified positions, toward Jalapa. Consequently, the body of the army will not return to this encampment; but will be followed to-morrow afternoon or early the next morning by the baggage trains of the several corps."[1]

Twiggs's division, which Scott, in his orders of April 17, referred to as being "already advanced within easy turning distance toward the enemy's left," had marched out from the camp at Plan del Rio on the morning of that day, following the rough track which Lee and Beauregard had traced, "over chasms," as General Grant remembered in his later years—

"where the walls were so steep that men could barely climb them. Animals could not. . . . The engineers, who had directed the opening, led the way and the troops followed. Artillery was let down the steep slopes by hand, the men engaged attaching a strong rope to the rear axle and letting the guns down, a piece at a time, while the men at the ropes kept their ground at the top, paying out gradually, while a few at the front directed the course of the piece. In like manner the guns were drawn by hand up the opposite slopes."[2]

Proceeding very slowly, with the rifle regiment in advance as skirmishers, the column cautiously felt its way through the chaparral until about two o'clock in the afternoon, when they arrived at the bottom of the Atalaya hill. They were there fired upon by some Mexican skirmishers, and the rifles, with the first artillery (serving as infantry), were at once ordered to charge the hill and take it.

"The balls came whistling in no very pleasant manner," wrote one of the artillerymen, "as we made our way up the steep hill, helping ourselves occasionally by the branches of the bushes; but the Mexicans are bad shots, and besides they were afraid to expose themselves

[1] General orders No. 111, April 17, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 259.
[2] Grant, *Memoirs*, I, 132.

by going forward to take deliberate aim; so that all their balls went whistling over our heads, doing us no damage whatever. In the meantime on we went, shouting and hurrahing as if we were going to some delightful entertainment, every one in a state of the highest excitement, and nearly out of breath with hurrahing and running up the steep hill, but at the same time disdaining to think of stopping to recover it."[1]

As the American troops reached the summit the small body of Mexicans on the top fled down the other side pursued by their assailants, who were exposed, as they reached the valley between the Atalaya and Cerro Gordo hills, to a severe fire from the latter position, and suffered some loss; but two mountain howitzers and part of a rocket battery also reached the Atalaya summit and helped to hold it against a threatened Mexican return. The American advance at this time, therefore, was checked, and the troops in the valley sheltered themselves behind rocks and trees as best they might until darkness fell, when they returned to the summit and rejoined the main body of the division, which bivouacked on the ground they had first occupied.

During the night one twenty-four-pounder gun and two twenty-four-pounder howitzers, with infinite labor, were dragged up by hand from the rear, under the direction of Captain Lee, and placed in position on the summit of the Atalaya hill. Twiggs was also joined during the night by three volunteer regiments under Shields—two Illinois and one New York—Scott's orders having been varied by sending three regiments instead of two. And on the same night, "with extreme toil and difficulty," as Scott reported, an eight-inch howitzer was put in position on the southerly side of the river, opposite to the Mexican right and a little over half a mile distant from their works.

Early on the morning of Sunday, April 18, the several columns of Scott's army moved to the general attack in accordance with his orders of the evening before. Twiggs at dawn found that the body of troops in front of him was being strongly reinforced, and his men were at once ordered

[1] *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 190.

to prepare to assault the Cerro Gordo ridge. At the same time his heavy artillery opened fire from the top of the Atalaya hill, and the Mexican position was also shelled by the mountain howitzers and rocket battery, which had been moved to a point further west. Under this fire the rifle regiment, the first artillery, and the third and seventh infantry were sent forward to the assault. They had to descend from the Atalaya hill to cross a ravine, and to ascend the steep slopes of the Cerro Gordo under a heavy fire. A breastwork, lined by Mexican troops, near the bottom of the hill was quickly carried, and the troops scrambled up without any serious loss, the slope being steep, rocky, and covered with thickets for about two-thirds of the way up. As the first American skirmishers approached the summit, a strong force of Mexican infantry posted behind a breastwork checked the advance of the brigade for three or four minutes; but as the main body of the attacking party came up cheering, the defenders "threw their muskets down and scampered in the utmost confusion down the opposite side of the hill." The captured Mexican guns were at once turned with great effect on the retreating troops and upon their supports stationed along the road.

While these regiments were carrying the summit of Cerro Gordo the remainder of Twiggs's division had continued along the northerly and westerly side of the hill for the purpose of carrying out Scott's orders to take up a position in the Mexican rear; but being attacked in flank by a Mexican force, the American troops faced south, and advanced in line across the hills that lay between them and the high-road.

"On coming out in the plain west of Cerro Gordo," Twiggs reported, "and in full view of the Jalapa road, a battery of five guns, supported by a body of lancers, was discovered. General Shields's brigade was discovered by this portion of the enemy. The battery opened with grape on him and on Lieutenant Benjamin's company. The gallant general, with a shout from his men, pushed boldly for the road on the enemy's left, who, seeing their position completely turned, as well as driven from the hill, abandoned themselves to flight and the battle was over."

Among those who fled from this part of the field were General Canalizo and all his cavalry, Almonte, and Santa Anna himself. As the latter related, the capture of Cerro Gordo hill and the artillery fire from its summit threw his men into such confusion that the infantry fled headlong down the steep paths that led to the bottom of the cañon, and he would himself have been made prisoner had he not instantly followed them. As the Americans by this time were advancing toward these paths he took the nearest of them, which he descended with difficulty (on muleback, it seems), crossed the river, and rode up a similar path on the south side. At a clearing he managed to collect a small number of the fugitives and pushed on for El Encero, where he had expected to find Canalizo and the cavalry; but Canalizo had continued five leagues beyond El Encero, and Santa Anna was compelled to continue his flight to the town of Orizaba, more than thirty miles southwesterly from the field of battle.

Before the Mexicans on the left of Santa Anna's line broke and fled, as just related, a vigorous contest had been begun on his extreme right, and the sound of the battle from that quarter doubtless hastened the steps of the fugitives. Pillow's brigade of volunteers, composed of two Tennessee and two Pennsylvania regiments, had been ordered to advance when he heard Twiggs's guns and to "pierce the enemy's line of batteries"; but before he had been able even to take up a position in front of the Mexican works the sound of Twiggs's attack on Cerro Gordo was heard. The line of advance was indicated by Lieutenants Zealous B. Tower and George B. McClellan, of the corps of engineers, and the volunteers advanced with energy and enthusiasm. As they approached the batteries they encountered many serious obstacles, such as dense chaparral thickets and brush entanglements, and sustained so heavy a loss—General Pillow himself being badly wounded—that the brigade halted, fell back a short distance, and did not succeed in accomplishing anything.

When Twiggs gained the high-road, and the main body of the Mexicans took flight, it was therefore impossible for

him to pursue immediately, as the force which had withstood Pillow's attack and the force supporting the battery on the road near these hills were still intact. But in a few moments these troops discovered that they were entirely surrounded; and as their only means of retreat was by means of the highway, of which Twiggs's division was in full possession, they hoisted a white flag at 9.35 A. M., and after a short parley surrendered as prisoners of war. Twiggs, with his infantry, then turned to pursue the retreating force along the high-road. He was presently overtaken and passed by the cavalry and artillery which Scott had held in reserve, and the pursuit of the flying Mexicans rolled away on that day as far as Santa Anna's hacienda of El Encero; but beyond dispersing still further the Mexican army no serious damage was done them. The Mexicans had had half an hour's start on the infantry and nearly two hours on the cavalry.

But though the pursuit yielded no captives, the results of the battle were surprisingly complete. Santa Anna's army was, for the moment, utterly dispersed, the road to the city of Mexico was open, and the whole of the Mexican artillery, ammunition, and supplies had fallen into Scott's hands.

"We are quite embarrassed," he wrote in his first report of the battle, "with the results of victory—prisoners of war, heavy ordnance, field batteries, small arms, and accoutrements. About three thousand men laid down their arms, with the usual proportion of field and company officers, besides five generals, several of them of great distinction. Pinson, Jarrero, La Vega, Norriega, and Obando. A 6th general, Vasques, was killed in defending the battery (tower) in the rear of the whole Mexican army, the capture of which gave us those glorious results. . . . I have determined to parole the prisoners—officers and men—as I have not the means of feeding them here beyond to-day, and cannot afford to detach a heavy body of horse and foot, with wagons, to accompany them to Vera Cruz. Our baggage train, though increasing, is not yet half large enough to give an assured progress to this army. . . . The small arms and other accoutrements, being of no value to our army here or at home, I have ordered them to be destroyed; for we have not the means of transporting them. I am also somewhat embarrassed with the pieces of artillery—all bronze—which we have captured. It would take a brigade and half the mules of this army to transport them fifty miles.

A field battery I shall take for service with the army; but the heavy metal must be collected and left here for the present. We have our own siege-train and the proper carriages with us. . . . One of the principal motives for paroling the prisoners of war is to diminish the resistance of other garrisons in our march."

On the following morning, Monday, May 19, Scott with all the regulars and Shields's brigade of volunteers entered Jalapa; and Worth's division, which had not been seriously engaged in the battle, was sent forward in advance toward Perote, where it was anticipated that resistance would be made. But Worth, advancing cautiously, soon passed the abandoned position of La Joya, where he found that defensive works had been begun and partially armed; and at noon, on April 22, he reached Perote and took peaceable possession of the old Spanish castle with sixty-six guns and large supplies of ammunition.[1]

The number of troops engaged on the American side may be closely estimated at nine thousand men, which includes Worth's division, who practically took no part at all in the action. The American losses amounted to 16 killed and 73 wounded in Twiggs's attack on the Atalaya hill on the seventeenth, and 247 killed and 295 wounded in the general battle of the eighteenth, about half the loss having occurred in the volunteer brigades of Pillow and Shields.

Santa Anna's forces were variously stated by him at seven thousand or seven thousand five hundred men; but from other sources it would appear that his total force amounted to over eight thousand rank and file, of which 5,840 were infantry and at least two thousand were cavalry. In addition there were a large number of artillerists for the forty guns he had in position, besides his medical corps and other non-combatants.[2] The locality was, of course, such that

[1] See Scott's reports of the battle with the reports from his subordinates; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 249–302. See also accounts by eye-witnesses in Ripley, II, 55–77; *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 178–180; Semmes, 175–184; Brackett, 63–72; *Reminiscences of a Campaign in Mexico*, 241–250; Hitchcock, 240–253; Oswandel, 108–136; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 34–42, App., 69. Also Ros Bárcena, 194–229; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, etc., 168–183; and Wilcox, 276–296.

[2] Ros Bárcena, 196.

Santa Anna's cavalry were of no use in the battle; and though they might have protected the retreat of the left wing when it was driven back by Twiggs's division, they were foremost in the flight.

Santa Anna's choice of the pass of Cerro Gordo as the spot at which to await attack by Scott's army was much criticised at the time by Mexican officers; and indeed he seems to have had no settled opinion of his own upon a matter concerning which he should have been the highest authority, as the scene of the battle lay about half-way between his two principal haciendas of Manga de Clavo and El Encero. His first idea had been to make a stand at the National Bridge, about fifteen miles east of Plan del Rio, and the pass of La Joya had also been considered; but apart from any other objection, the latter point was seven or eight miles west of Jalapa, and its defence would have necessitated giving up the town to the Americans without a blow.

Colonel Robles, who was Santa Anna's chief engineer, expressed himself as strongly of opinion that Cerro Gordo was not the best place to make resistance. Some slight intrenchments along the road he thought might serve to delay the American army, but he was in favor of fortifying and strongly holding the position of Corral Falso, about six miles in the rear of the ranchería of Cerro Gordo. His objections to Cerro Gordo were briefly: The difficulty of getting water, owing to the fact that the river near Cerro Gordo ran through a cañon five or six hundred feet deep; the great length of the line it was necessary to hold and the difficulty of reinforcing any threatened point; the impossibility of making use of the cavalry, in which the Mexican army was superior in numbers; the broken and woody character of the surrounding land, which facilitated the enemy's advance up to within a very short distance of the defenders; the possibility of the position being turned; and finally, the impossibility, in case of disaster, of saving the artillery and effecting an orderly retreat.

Moreover, Robles insisted that if the position of Cerro Gordo was to be held at all it was necessary to fortify

the Atalaya hill. Upon all these points he was overruled by Santa Anna himself, who, as we have seen, visited the ground in person. So far as fortifying Atalaya hill was concerned he and his staff decided that it was useless; first, because it was commanded by the hill of Cerro Gordo, and, second, because it was surrounded on the north and east by gullies and woods which, according to Santa Anna's own expression, not even a rabbit could get through. But Twiggs's division got through, and their capture of the Atalaya hill on the afternoon of the seventeenth enabled them early the next morning to pierce the centre and turn the left of the Mexican line.[1]

Scott found subject for congratulation in the assertion that his orders for a battle had been exactly carried out. The result had indeed been what he had foreseen, but in detail the battle was fought on somewhat different lines. It was evidently his intention that Twiggs's division should not undertake any active fighting until they struck the high-road west of the Cerro Gordo hill on Sunday morning, where they were expected to take the Mexican force in the rear; but this expectation must have been based upon imperfect knowledge of the topography, which practically necessitated the taking of Atalaya and the adjacent hills on Saturday, so as to enable Twiggs's division to pass north and west of them to the high-road. It is also probable that Scott never intended so vigorous an attack upon the Mexican right as Pillow actually attempted. Pillow was ordered not to assault the Mexican batteries until he heard Twiggs's guns, and it was clearly Scott's expectation that these guns would not be heard until Twiggs was established in the rear of the Mexican army, and that then no very vigorous defence of the batteries was to be anticipated. As it turned out, Twiggs's guns were heard long before the head of his column had reached the high-road, and when it was attacking not the rear but the centre of the Mexican position, and under the circumstances Pillow's assault was doomed to failure.

Scott's victory at Cerro Gordo had opened the road to the

[1] *Ibid.*, 107–198.

capital, and if he had been in possession of sufficient means of transportation he could undoubtedly have marched directly to the valley of Mexico, even with the limited number of effective men which casualties in battle and the uncertainties of the climate had left him. His difficulties in the way of moving his troops were not very well understood at Washington, though Scott's proper objective was quite clearly apprehended; and the administration felt much annoyance at what they all regarded as inexcusable delay.

"I would not only march to the city of Mexico," said the President in a cabinet discussion, "but I would pursue Santa Anna's army wherever it was, and capture or destroy it. I expressed the opinion that if I had a proper commander of the army, who would lay aside the technical rules of war to be found in books, which required a long train of baggage wagons; one who would go light & move rapidly, I had no doubt Santa Anna & his whole army could be destroyed or captured in a short time." [1]

Scott, however, did adhere to "the technical rules of war," and did not attempt to move without the means of subsisting his army. Perhaps his greatest anxiety at this time was that of supply. Writing from Jalapa to Colonel Wilson, the governor of Vera Cruz, he said: "We already occupy Perote and shall soon occupy Puebla. Indeed, we might safely take possession of Mexico without a loss, perhaps, of one hundred men"; but the real dangers and difficulties arose from the necessity of keeping communications open with Vera Cruz. He therefore urged on Wilson the infinite importance of getting up all essential supplies; those, namely, that fell within the ordnance, quartermaster's, commissary, and medical departments. Those which Scott regarded as indispensable were—

"medicines and hospital stores, clothing for troops, salt, ammunition, shoes for animals, and coffee; articles only a little inferior in importance are knapsacks, blankets, hard bread, bacon and camp kettles; sugar, flour, rice, fresh meat, beans and forage, we hope to find in the country. The above lists of indispensable articles, and of articles almost equally so, may not be complete, but it is nearly so." [2]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 432.
[2] Scott to Wilson, April 23, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 946.

A few days later he wrote in a querulous tone to the War Department, complaining of the insufficiency of his trains to bring up essential supplies, and of the difficulties of guarding his communications with Vera Cruz. The first fifty miles west of the port, up to Cerro Gordo, with the exception, perhaps, of one locality (Paso de Ovejas), were as deadly to strangers as any part of the coast; and he concluded that he could not leave any garrisons along those fifty miles. It would be necessary, in any case, he thought, to supply strong escorts to all trains, in order "to guard them against rancheros and other irregular troops of the enemy, who are well acquainted with the country and are natives of the climate."

He also wrote that he had expected the rapid arrival of detachments of the new regiments, and had made arrangements to send forward trains with each successive detachment of those troops; but he had just learned that about three thousand men under General Cadwalader, upon whom he had counted, had been ordered to the Rio Grande—to his great disappointment.[1]

"I have no certain intelligence," he added, "from Major General Taylor, later than his victory at Buena Vista, save that he had cleared his rear of the enemy, and the general belief at this place (Jalapa), which I begin to doubt, that he has reached San Luis de Potosi. I have sent an emissary to communicate with him, wherever he may be. . . . Here the weather is uncomfortably cool and requiring winter clothing, at the end of April; twenty-five miles below, the heat, except in the northers, is distressing early in March. Unfortunately, very many of our men, regulars as well as volunteers, have lost both great-coats and blankets, and the volunteers are otherwise badly clad. How many of the latter will re-engage under the act approved March 3rd, only received two days ago, I know not; probably but few. Hence the greater my disappointment, caused by sending the new troops to the Rio Grande; for, besides their keeping the road in our present rear open for many weeks, by marches, in successive detachments, I had intended, as I advanced, to leave strong garrisons in this place, in Perote and Puebla, and to keep, at the head of the movement,

[1] Cadwalader had been ordered to the Rio Grande in a moment of panic when Taylor's communications were severed after Buena Vista. At the very moment Scott was complaining of Cadwalader's detention, orders were being issued directing him to proceed to Vera Cruz.

a force equal to any probable opposition. It may now depend on the number of old volunteers who may re-engage, and a number of new troops that may arrive from the Brazos in time, as also, in some degree, upon the advance of Major General Taylor, whether I shall find this army in strength to leave the garrisons and to occupy the capital."[1]

Some ten days later Scott felt strong enough to push forward his advance to Puebla, and orders were accordingly issued to Worth, who was halted at Perote, to advance as soon as he was joined by General Quitman with three regiments of volunteers "and a train with some general supplies for the army." One regiment of volunteers, with a detachment of artillerists sufficient to serve the batteries of the castle, were to be left as a garrison; and Worth, with his own division and the two remaining regiments of Quitman's brigade, was to take and hold Puebla, but was not to advance beyond it. Scott then hoped to reach Puebla himself with Twiggs's division in the course of about two weeks later, depending on the arrival of trains from Vera Cruz.[2]

It was the expectation of the War Department at this time that by the end of June Scott's force would number twenty thousand, even after allowing for the discharge of the twelve months' men. In all 8,113 volunteers had been raised under the call of November, 1846, and it was expected that 5,360 more would be raised under a call issued April 19, 1847, of which Scott, of course, had no notice when he wrote from Jalapa. There were, besides, the ten additional "new regular" regiments which were to be enlisted for the war, numbering 8,512 rank and file.[3] But the calculations of the department failed to take into account the great amount of sickness in the army. Early in June there were about three thousand two hundred men in Scott's various hospitals, which left him with certainly less than ten thousand effective men in all. In this instance, as generally throughout the war, the generals in the field and the officials of the War Department

[1] Scott to Marcy, April 28, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 944.
[2] Scott to Worth, May 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 957.
[3] Marcy to Scott, April 30, 1847; *ibid.*, 922-928. Same to same, May 20, 1847; *ibid.*, 953.

greatly underestimated the numbers necessary to be enlisted in order to keep up a given effective force at the front.

"The toils and hardships of the first campaign," wrote Major I. I. Stevens shortly after the close of the war, "without including casualties in battle, will, in a distant and untried theatre, reduce the effective force of regulars to three-fourths or four-fifths, and of volunteers to one-half or two-thirds of the original number. To have insured a column of 10,000 effectives in advance of Monterey, and one of 20,000 throughout the Vera Cruz campaign, estimating the force to keep open the northern line at 3000 men, required an additional force of 10,000 volunteers and 12,000 regulars."

But at the time Cerro Gordo was fought only about eight thousand volunteers and eight thousand five hundred regulars had been even called out. Moreover, the time required to enlist, clothe, arm, equip, and drill these men, and then transport them fifteen hundred or two thousand miles to join the army, was also greatly underestimated; and it is not surprising that with the best will in the world Scott's reinforcements fell far short of the number that had been regarded as necessary for the campaign, and that they reached him much later than he had expected.

"The consequence," to quote again from Major Stevens, "was that the shock of battle had to be borne by half the numbers originally contemplated. Great risk of disaster was incurred on both lines (Taylor's and Scott's). Impossibilities almost were attempted, and impossibilities almost were performed."[1]

Scott foolishly accused the government, and particularly Marcy, of trying to "destroy" him by wilfully withholding both men and supplies, a charge which the Secretary of War had no difficulty in refuting in a long and angry correspondence which later ensued.[2] Whatever else may be said of Marcy, he certainly was not a fool; and none but a fool in his position would have endeavored to injure the reputation of a general by deliberately weakening his army. To "destroy" Scott by causing the loss of battles would have been the surest way of destroying the administration.

[1] Stevens, 37.

[2] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1218–1251.

The War Department was not effectively organized to undertake the sudden mobilization of large bodies of troops in a distant campaign. The wonder is not that so many delays and disappointments occurred, but that so much was accomplished by an inadequate and inexperienced general staff. Certainly Scott was the last man who should have criticised the failures that occurred. He had been for years a part of the mechanism of the War Department, and must have known, as well as any one, its weakness under the strain of sudden emergencies. For more than fourteen months before war was actually declared it was evident to every observer that war was highly probable, but Scott made no plans, collected no information, and did nothing to prepare for the coming strain upon the head-quarters organization of the army. The circumstance that the army under his immediate command in June, 1847, was inadequate in numbers and lacking in supplies was not the fault of any individual, and still less was it due to any deliberate act of Polk's administration; but it was the inevitable result of congressional delays in authorizing enlistments, added to thirty years of indifference and neglect on the part of successive Congresses and administrations, and commanding officers and heads of bureaus.

But in spite of his loudly proclaimed weakness Scott now took the very doubtful step of sending back to Vera Cruz such of the twelve months' volunteers as were not willing to re-enlist, inasmuch as their terms of service would expire within the following six weeks. The subject, he wrote, had given him long and deep solicitude.

"To part with so large and so respectable a portion of the army, in the middle of a country, which, though broken in its power, is not yet disposed to sue for peace; to provide for the return home of the seven regiments from this interior position, at a time when I find it quite difficult to provide transportation and supplies for the operating forces which remain; and all this without any prospect of succor or reinforcement, in perhaps the next seven months, beyond some three hundred army recruits, present novelties utterly unknown to any invading army before.

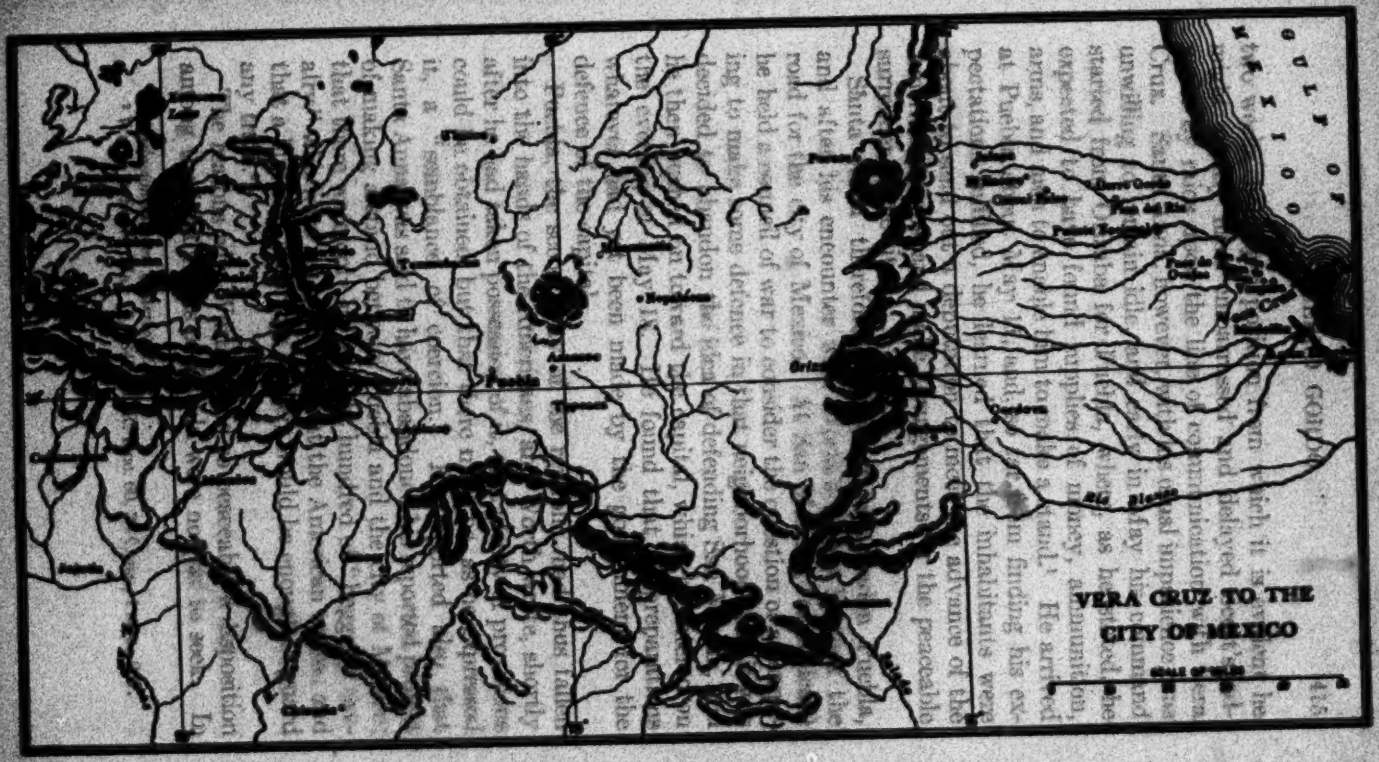
"With the addition of ten or twelve thousand new levies, in April and May, asked for, and until very recently expected, or even with the addition of the two or three thousand new troops destined for this army, but suddenly, by the orders of the War Department, diverted, to the Rio Grande frontier, I might, notwithstanding the unavoidable discharge of the old volunteers, seven regiments and two independent companies, advance with confidence upon the enemy's capital. I shall, nevertheless, advance, but whether beyond Puebla will depend on intervening information and reflection. The general panic given to the enemy at Cerro Gordo still remaining, I think it probable that we shall go to Mexico; or if the enemy recover from that we must renew the consternation by another blow. Puebla, it is known, does not hope to resist our progress, but stands ready to receive us amicably, or at least courteously. Our difficulties lie in gathering in subsistence from a country covered with exasperated guerillas and banditti, and, maintaining, with inadequate garrisons and escorts, communications with the rear." [1]

Nine days after this letter was written Worth took possession of Puebla after a skirmish near the village of Amozoc with a body of cavalry which he estimated at from two thousand to three thousand strong. Upon the appearance of this force, Worth halted and sent two batteries of field artillery in the direction of the Mexican cavalry.

"The batteries soon opened a rapid and effective fire. After some twenty-five rounds, the entire column broke, without attempting to charge or firing a shot and hastily fled up the sides of the convenient hills. Only one company of infantry (of the 6th) was enabled, from distance, to deliver its fire. The broken column was seen to reunite and resume its march in the direction of General Quitman's approach. The 2nd artillery and 8th infantry, with two sections of the light batteries were put in its track, when the enemy again swerved to the left and disappeared in the hills." [2]

The body of cavalry which Worth thus encountered was commanded by Santa Anna himself. After his arrival at Orizaba he had succeeded in collecting about four thousand men, composed partly of fugitives from Cerro Gordo and partly of local militia, and at Orizaba he remained for about

[1] Scott to Marcy, May 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 954.
[2] Worth to Scott, May 15, 1847; *ibid.*, 995.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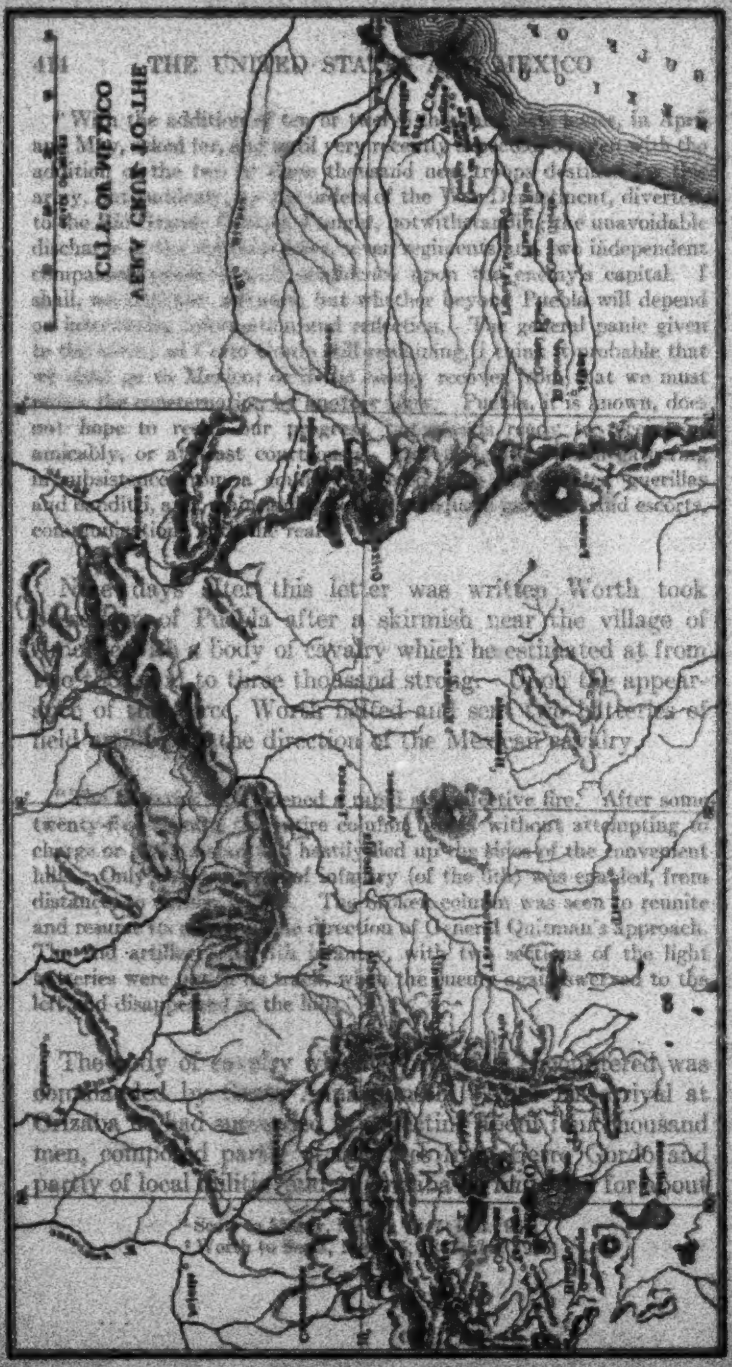



Within a few days after this letter was written Worth took possession of Puebla after a skirmish near the village of Amozoc with a body of cavalry which he estimated at from two thousand to three thousand strong. With the appearance of the force Worth halted and sent out [illegible] of field [illegible] in the direction of the Mexican cavalry.

[illegible] opened a rapid offensive fire. After some twenty [illegible] retire column [illegible] without attempting to charge or [illegible] hastily fallied upon the flanks of the convenient hills. Only [illegible] of cavalry (of the light) was enabled, from distance [illegible] The whole column was seen to reunite and resume its [illegible] direction of General Quitman's approach. The mounted artillery [illegible] with the sections of the light batteries were [illegible] which the enemy again assailed to the left and disappeared in the hills.

The body of cavalry [illegible] encountered was compelled [illegible] arrival at Amozoc [illegible] thousand men, composed partly [illegible] Puebla and partly of local militia [illegible] for about

two weeks, holding a position from which it is evident he might greatly have embarrassed and delayed Scott's advance by raids upon the line of communication with Vera Cruz. Santa Anna, however, with his usual impatience, was unwilling to remain idle, and early in May his command started from Orizaba for Puebla, where, as he stated, he expected to have found supplies of money, ammunition, arms, and men to enable him to make a stand.[1] He arrived at Puebla about May 11, and, so far from finding his expectations fulfilled, he learned that the inhabitants were about to send out a deputation to meet the advance of the American troops, and make arrangements for the peaceable surrender of the city.

Santa Anna therefore determined to abandon Puebla, and after his encounter with Worth's troops he took the road for the city of Mexico. At San Martin (Texmelúcan) he held a council of war to consider the question of attempting to make some defence in that neighborhood; but it was decided to abandon the idea of defending San Martin, and he then pushed on toward the capital, which he entered on the evening of May 18. He found that no preparations whatever had yet been made by the government for the defence of the capital.

Puebla, the second city of the republic, had thus fallen into the hands of the Americans, and Worth wrote, shortly after he had taken possession of it, that plenty of provisions could be obtained, but that there must be, as he expressed it, a "semblance of coercion." He reported also that Santa Anna was said to have abandoned his reported project of making a stand between Puebla and the city of Mexico; that there were only six or eight hundred of "beggarly cavalry" who were ready to strike at the American trains; and that a hundred American soldiers would be enough to guard any train.[2]

The reasons why Worth found so peaceable a disposition among the inhabitants of Puebla were not far to seek. In

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 42.
[2] Worth to Scott, May 19, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 967.

the first place, Scott had published a manifesto at Jalapa on May 11, 1847, which set forth, with practical good sense and in benevolent and conciliatory language, the shortcomings of the Mexican government and the pacific desires and intentions of the American troops. According to a Mexican historian this paper had much to do with the willingness to surrender.[1] But the fact was that no proclamation would have produced any effect upon the people of the city if the majority of the citizens had not been already disposed to accept anything that looked like peace and a stable government. Disorder, amounting at times to anarchy, and almost uninterrupted warfare for so many years, had discouraged the entire population. They longed for individual and public security, and for an opportunity to enjoy the advantages of civil liberty. The great mass of the people—the plundered farmers and merchants and artisans, and the poor and isolated Indians who were unwillingly forced into the armies of Mexico, and who considered the whole white or mixed race as usurpers of their territory—had no desire for war. Nearly forty years of civil strife had been enough. And the striking contrast between the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of Vera Cruz and Jalapa under control of American officers, who ruled firmly but paid in cash, and the demands which the Mexican government was continually making for new sacrifices from the people, coupled with threats of fresh violence, were bound to be favorable to the invaders.[2]

Scott at any rate had no hesitation in riding through the country ahead of his army; and with a small escort, number-

[1] Worth wrote from Puebla (in the letter mentioned in the foregoing note) that the proclamation "takes admirably, and has produced more decided effects than all the blows from Palo Alto to Cerro Gordo." Whether it produced as good an effect with the members of the governing class in the capital may be doubted.

[2] Ros. Bárcena, 278. Worth, however, did not have all plain sailing. An account of his entry into the city and of minor controversies with the ayuntamiento will be found in a small anonymous pamphlet entitled *Relación de los Sucesos acaecidos en la Ciudad de Puebla del 14 al 27 de Mayo de* 1847. One dispute arose from his insisting on trying by court-martial some men accused of murdering one soldier and wounding another in a suburb of the city (pp. 13, 21, etc.)

ing only about two hundred and fifty men, he joined Worth at Puebla on the twenty-eighth of May, Twiggs following shortly after. Upon the arrival of this division, Scott had in Puebla 5,280 effectives (non-commissioned officers and privates), or something over fifty-five hundred in all—a force evidently too small to garrison that city and also to march upon the capital. But Scott hoped to be so reinforced in two or three weeks as to be enabled to advance, and he ordered up to Puebla almost all of the troops who had not been directed to return to the United States. Jalapa was abandoned, and the sick and wounded at that point were either left in the care of the local civil authorities—who faithfully discharged their trust—or were put in charge of the small American garrison in the castle of Perote.[1]

[1] Scott to Childs, June 3, 1847; Scott to Marcy, June 4, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 993, 997. Scott's letter to Marcy was the last received from him at the War Department until the twelfth of November following.

## CHAPTER XLIII

### SCOTT AT PUEBLA

Not quite three weeks after the battle of Cerro Gordo, and while Scott at Jalapa was in a state of nervous worry and excitement over the many problems of transport and supply that were pressing upon his attention, he received a letter which he regarded as extremely offensive and which materially affected his relations with President Polk's administration. This letter was from a certain Nicholas P. Trist, and was dated at Vera Cruz on the sixth of May. Scott had only a slight acquaintance with Trist, but did know that he was the chief clerk of the State Department in Washington.

In order to understand the purpose of Trist's journey to Mexico, and the results which followed from what was in fact a very ill-judged letter, it is necessary to go back some months and to relate events which were known at that time to only few persons outside the President's cabinet.

On the twelfth of January, 1847, Buchanan, at a meeting of the President's cabinet, reported that he had just seen Colonel Atocha, "formerly of Mexico and recently from Havana," and that Atocha had again undertaken to expound the views of Santa Anna and his desires in favor of peace. When Atocha had called nearly a year before he had come entirely without credentials of any sort; but he seems to have now thought it necessary, in view of the demonstrated folly of the advice he had then given, to explain to Buchanan that he had letters from Santa Anna, Almonte, and Rejón. These letters proved not to be in any sense credentials, but were mere friendly correspondence, setting out the views of the writers on various topics.

Atocha refrained from calling upon the President, but he announced to Buchanan that he intended to confer with Senator Benton; and the President asked Buchanan to get what information he could through Benton. Two days later Benton called upon the President and translated some letters addressed to Atocha from both Santa Anna and Almonte, in which they expressed their desire for an honorable peace.

"It is manifest," the President noted, "that Atocha possesses their confidence and is in correspondence with them. From these letters it is manifest, also, that Atocha's visit to Washington is at their instance. His object, no doubt, is to open the way for negotiations, and to ascertain the terms upon which peace would be made. The letters which Colonel Benton read to me were in the Spanish language, but he translated them to me into English. As an additional proof that Atocha is in the confidence of Santa Anna, he was fully advised of the visit made to Santa Anna by Alexander Slidell McKenzie at Havana last summer."[1]

Atocha's suggestions as to the terms of peace were the Rio Grande as a boundary, with the space between that and the Nueces as neutral territory, and fifteen or twenty million dollars for California. Atocha "seemed to be uninformed about New Mexico. He suggested that peace commissioners should meet at Havana and in the meantime the blockade of Vera Cruz should be raised."

The President was satisfied, as the result of his conversation with Benton, that Atocha might be made useful; but he considered it impolitic for him to see Atocha in person, and it was agreed that all further communications should be had through Benton and Buchanan. At the next cabinet meeting Buchanan reported the results of these interviews. He said that he regarded the evidence as conclusive that "this person was in the confidence of Gen'l Santa Anna and Almonte and other principal men now conducting the Government of Mexico," and had no doubt that Atocha had been sent to Washington by them to prepare the way for peace. Buchanan, moreover, said he had no doubt the Mexican government would make peace on the terms stated by

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 325.

Atocha; but the President at once remarked that he "would not agree to the proposed reservation of a neutral territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, and that we must obtain a cession of New Mexico as well as the Californias for a consideration." Buchanan said that he had so informed Atocha, who had again urged the appointment of peace commissioners and the raising of the blockade of Vera Cruz.

"To this," says the President, "I objected because Mexico might not be sincere in the matter, and might desire to have our naval forces withdrawn from Vera Cruz for a time so as to enable her to import arms & munitions of War into Vera Cruz, and after that was accomplished might refuse to treat or to agree to such terms as we could accept, and that if this should turn out to be so we would be overreached, and Mexico would thereby obtain an important advantage, and subject the administration to the ridicule of the whole world for its credulity and weakness. I was unwilling therefore to raise the blockade or to relax our warlike movements, either by land or sea, until a Treaty was actually concluded and signed. After that was done, I would be willing to suspend military operations for a reasonable time, until it was ascertained whether the Treaty would be ratified by the two Governments. The opinion of the Cabinet was then taken and they were unanimously of opinion that a letter should be addressed by the Secretary of State to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico, proposing the appointment of Commissioners on the part of both nations to meet at Havana to negotiate for peace."[1]

No time was lost in preparing a communication in this sense to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations. It had in fact been drafted by Buchanan before the cabinet meeting; and after being unanimously approved by the President and members of the cabinet, it was shown to Benton and approved by him. It began by stating that the President wished to submit a proposition more specific than that contained in the communication of July 27, 1846, for the purpose of terminating the war; that the first wish of his heart was to conclude a peace which would be equally advantageous to both countries and would bind the two republics together in bonds of friendship that could not be broken; and he therefore proposed to send, either to Havana or to

[1] *Ibid.*, 332.

Jalapa, as the Mexican government might prefer, "one or more of our most distinguished citizens as commissioners, clothed with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace with similar commissioners on the part of Mexico." The American commissioners would be given discretionary power to suspend hostilities and raise existing blockades immediately after meeting the Mexican commissioners.[1]

Benton, of course, felt convinced that he was the person who ought to be empowered to undertake the negotiations, while at the same time he should command the army. He called on the President at ten o'clock on Saturday night, the twenty-third of January, in company with Senator Allen, of Ohio, and the President noted that "they had been dining out." They discussed Taylor and Scott, and concurred in the opinion that neither of these officers were fit for the command of the army and that they ought to be superseded.

"They were both strong & vehement on the subject. Col. Benton among other things said, I was willing to take the command of the army as Lieut. General, but the Senate had rejected the proposition to appoint such an officer; but now, Sir! seeing what I have to-day I will go as a Maj'r Gen'l or a Lieut. Col., or in any other rank, provided I can have the command of the army, & if I can have such command I will close the War before July."[2]

And a few days later Benton wrote to the President insisting that he ought not only to have the chief command of the army in Mexico, but also that he should "be invested with plenary Diplomatic powers to conclude a Treaty of peace."[3]

The cabinet, however, as soon as the subject was mentioned, objected to investing Benton with diplomatic powers. "Mr. Walker objected to employing him in this capacity. The other members of the cabinet appeared from their remarks & their acquiescence to concur with Mr. Walker in his views." And the President thereupon expressed his wish that, if Mexico agreed to negotiate, Bu-

[1] Buchanan to Minister of Foreign Relations, Jan. 18, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 36.
[2] Polk's *Diary*, II, 352.
[3] *Ibid.*, 412.

chanan should go as commissioner on the part of the United States.[1]

The President had also, in confidence, expressed his views freely to various members of the Senate, and among others to Crittenden, of Kentucky, who "though differing with me in politics is an honorable gentleman." Crittenden, according to the President, expressed his concurrence in the views of the administration respecting the proposed outlines of a treaty of peace, and was specially pleased with the President's intention not to insist upon taking from Mexico a larger amount of territory than that embraced in New Mexico and California.

"I told him," said the President, "I deprecated the agitation of the slavery question in Congress, and though a South-Western man & from a slave-holding State as well as himself, I did not desire to acquire more Southern Territory than that which I had indicated, because I did not desire by doing so to give occasion for the agitation of a question which might sever and endanger the Union itself. I told him the question of slavery would probably never be a practical one if we acquired New Mexico & California, because there would be but a narrow ribbon of territory South of the Missouri compromise line of 36° 30′, and in it slavery would probably never exist. He expressed himself highly gratified at these views."[2]

So matters rested for two months, while the President and his Secretary of State awaited the receipt of a reply from the Mexican government to the overtures of peace.

Atocha, bearing Buchanan's note of January 18, reached the city of Mexico on February 13, and the communication was at once laid before Congress together with a statement by Atocha of what he understood the American conditions of peace would be. These, he said, were a boundary from the mouth of the Rio Grande due west to the Pacific along the parallel of 26° north latitude, for which the United States would pay fifteen million dollars.[3] It is not surprising that Mexico should at that time have been unwilling to treat upon any such basis.

[1] *Ibid.*, 410.
[2] *Ibid.*, 350.
[3] Bankhead to Palmerston, March 2, 1847; *British Foreign Office MSS.*

By March 20, 1847, Atocha was back again in Washington with a reply from Monasterio, who was again acting as Minister of Foreign Relations, written on the first day of the battle of Buena Vista. It was conceived in terms much better calculated to gratify the Mexican newspapers than to put an end to the war. After unflattering remarks on the "ulterior designs" and the "aggressions" of the United States, the note stated that the Vice-President (Gómez Farias) would "lend himself to the adjustment which is indicated to him," but only on the understanding that he would never agree to give up the independence and the integrity of the republic; and that "the raising of the blockade of our ports and the complete evacuation of the territory of the republic by the invading forces shall be previously accepted as a preliminary condition."[1]

The refusal of the Mexican government even to hear what proposals the United States government had to make—for such was, of course, the effect of the conditions they imposed—came as a great disappointment to President Polk and his cabinet; but in a few days the detailed reports of Taylor's victory at Buena Vista arrived, and the first news of the surrender of Vera Cruz; and again the subject of negotiations for peace was considered by the cabinet. The President thus records the discussion which took place on Saturday, the tenth of April.

"I had several times mentioned to Mr. Buchanan the importance of having a commissioner vested with Plenipotentiary powers, who should attend the head-quarters of the army ready to take advantage of circumstances as they might arise to negotiate for peace. I stated to the Cabinet to-day that such was my opinion, and that I thought it the more important since the news of the recent victories, and especially since the information received this morning of the fall of Vera Cruz & the Castle of San juan D'Ulloa. All the members of the Cabinet present concurred in this opinion. The embarrassment in carrying it out consisted in the selection of a suitable commissioner or commissioners who would be satisfactory to the country. This was a great difficulty. Such is the jealousy of the different factions of the Democratic party in reference to the next Presidential Election to-

[1] Monasterio to Buchanan, Feb. 22, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 37.

wards each other that it is impossible to appoint any prominent man or men without giving extensive dissatisfaction to others, and thus jeopardising the ratification of any Treaty they might make. In this also the Cabinet were agreed. I stated that I preferred that the Secretary of State should be the sole commissioner to negotiate the Treaty, & that I would have no hesitation in deputing him on that special service if the Mexican authorities had agreed to appoint commissioners on their part, but as they had refused to do this he could not attend the head-quarters of the army for an indefinite period of time and with no assurance whether the Mexican authorities would agree to negotiate. Mr. Buchanan expressed his entire concurrence in this view. He said he would be willing to go in person if there was any assurance that negotiations would be speedily opened, but under existing circumstances & with our present information he could not, of course, think of going. Mr. Buchanan then suggested that Mr. N. P. Trist, the chief clerk of the Department of State, might be deputed secretly with Plenipotentiary powers to the head-quarters of the army, and that it might be made known that such a person was with the army ready to negotiate. Mr. Trist, he said, was an able man, perfectly familiar with the Spanish character and language, & might go with special and well defined instructions. The suggestions struck me favourably. After much conversation on the subject it was unanimously agreed by the Cabinet that it would be proper to send Mr. Trist, and that he should take with him a Treaty drawn up by the Secretary of State & approved by the Cabinet, which he should be authorised to tender to the Mexican Government, and to conclude with them if they would accept it; but that if they would not accept it, but would agree to appoint commissioners to negotiate, that Mr. Trist should in that event report the fact to his Government, when Mr. Buchanan could go out as the commissioner. This being agreed upon by the members of the Cabinet present, & it being desirable, as it was a very important matter, that every member of the Cabinet should be consulted, I sent for the Secretary of the Treasury, who had retired. He came, & I laid the whole matter fully before him. He fully concurred in opinion with the other members of the Cabinet."[1]

The matter having thus been agreed upon, Trist was sent for to the White House, and the President and Buchanan having explained the matter fully to him, Trist consented to go, the President, with his habitual secretiveness, being most insistent that extreme care should be taken to avoid publicity.

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 465–467.

Trist at this time was not quite forty-seven years old, a native of Virginia and a neighbor and protégé of Jefferson, whose granddaughter he had married. He had entered West Point, but had resigned before graduation and had studied law. He subsequently entered the service of the government as a clerk in the Treasury, was for a time private secretary to President Jackson, and was subsequently consul in Havana, where he gained his knowledge of "the Spanish character and language." His education, surroundings, and experience certainly appeared to give assurance of his possessing those qualities of good breeding and good sense which were essential to carrying out successfully the important duty intrusted to him.

By Tuesday, the thirteenth of April, the cabinet had before it Buchanan's *projet* of a treaty which Trist was to be authorized to sign. In substance it followed the lines of the instructions given to Slidell eighteen months before. The boundary was to be the Rio Grande from its mouth "to the point where it intersects the Southern boundary of New Mexico" and was to convey to the United States the whole of New Mexico and Upper and Lower California. In addition, the right of passage and transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, similar to that contained in the then newly signed treaty with New Granada relative to the transit across the Isthmus of Panama, was to be granted to the United States. There was much discussion as to the consideration which the United States should offer to pay for these cessions. The assumption of the claims of American citizens against Mexico was at once agreed to by all present, but Buchanan wished to limit the additional payments to fifteen millions of dollars. The President, however, was willing to give thirty millions rather than "fail to make a Treaty"; and finally it was agreed that Trist should be privately instructed that he might go as high as thirty millions, with a reduction to twenty millions as a maximum if Lower California and the transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec could not be obtained.[1]

[1] *Ibid.*, 471–475.

Polk thus finally committed his cabinet to the principle of accepting a line running west from El Paso to the head of the Gulf of California, a matter which some months before had caused considerable discussion in the cabinet. Walker, of Mississippi, in particular had "insisted that we should, if practicable, acquire by Treaty all the country North of a line drawn from the mouth of the Rio Grande in Latitude about 26° West to the Pacific." That proposal had been vigorously resisted by Buchanan, upon the ground especially that the country south of the El Paso line would be inevitably slave-holding territory; but the President at first had been rather inclined to side with Walker. Further reflection, and especially the course of the debates in Congress, had convinced the President of the unwisdom of Walker's views, which doubtless were prompted in great measure by his desire for expansion into what he supposed to be a cotton and sugar-growing region.[1]

The general principles having thus been settled, a special meeting of the cabinet was held on Thursday, April 15, at which the proposed treaty, the full power for Trist, and all the other necessary papers were submitted and approved.[2] The Secretaries of War and the Navy also read drafts of orders which they had respectively prepared to Scott and Perry, informing them of Trist's mission and requiring them to afford him all the facilities in their power in accomplishing its object. They were, in effect, further instructed to suspend hostilities if a treaty should be concluded and ratified by Mexico; but the language used was unfortunately vague.

On the next day Trist set forth upon his mission, which Polk believed had been kept a profound secret, known only to the members of the cabinet.[3] Within a week, however, the

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 406–407. The additional territory which Walker wished to acquire would have formed an immense triangle of nearly two hundred thousand square miles, embracing the states of Chihuahua and Sonora, the greater part of Coahuila, and small parts of four other Mexican states.

[2] Buchanan to Trist, April 15, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81–88. And see also the form of Trist's letter of credence in Moore's *Buchanan*, VII, 271–276.

[3] Trist went under an assumed name in New Orleans, whence he sailed for Vera Cruz. See his letter to Buchanan written from New Orleans on April 25, 1847, in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 150.

President was greatly disturbed by the publication of two letters in the New York *Herald* and the Boston *Post*, disclosing "with remarkable accuracy and particularity" the facts as to Trist's employment.

"I have not been more vexed or excited," says the President's diary, "since I have been President than at this occurrence. The Success of Mr. Trist's mission I knew in the beginning must depend mainly on keeping it a secret from that portion of the Federal press & leading men in the country who, since the commencement of the war with Mexico, have been giving 'aid & comfort' to the enemy by their course. . . . I do not doubt that Mexico has been & will be discouraged from making peace, in the hope that their friends in the U. S. will come into power at the next Presidential election. That this has been the effect of the unpatriotic & anti-American course of the *National Intelligencer* & other federal papers, all know. Their articles against their own Government & country are translated & re-published in the Mexican papers. It was my knowledge of this that induced my great desire to keep the mission of Mr. Trist a secret."[1]

However, it was too late to do anything to counteract the newspaper disclosures, and Trist, as we have seen, reached Vera Cruz on May 6 and wrote to Scott the letter referred to at the beginning of this chapter, merely enclosing the orders from the War Department of April 14 and a letter addressed by the State Department to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, to be forwarded by a flag of truce, but not in any way explaining the real objects of his mission.

The orders from the War Department informed Scott that the success of the military operations since the beginning of the war seemed to justify the expectation that Mexico might be ready to treat for peace, and that, with the view to a result so desirable, the President had commissioned Mr. Trist, of the State Department, to proceed to the head-quarters of the army or navy, as might be most convenient, so as to be in readiness to receive any proposal which the Mexican government might see fit to make.

"Mr. Trist," the orders continued, "is clothed with such diplomatic powers as will authorize him to enter into arrangements with

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 483, 484.

the government of Mexico for the suspension of hostilities. Should he make known to you, in writing, that the contingency has occurred, in consequence of which the President is willing that further active military operations should cease, you will regard such notice as a direction from the President to suspend them until further orders. . . . Mr. Trist is also the bearer of a despatch to the secretary of foreign affairs of the government of Mexico, in reply to one addressed to the Secretary of State here. You will transmit that despatch to the commander of the Mexican forces, with the request that it may be laid before his government, at the same time giving information that Mr. Trist, an officer from our department of foreign affairs, next in rank to its chief, is at your head-quarters or on board the squadron, as the case may be."[1]

Scott's jealous and suspicious nature at once took fire at Marcy's order and at the news that the chief clerk of the State Department was considered the proper person to take up diplomatic negotiations with Mexico. Scott had expected, from something the President had said to him the previous November, that so distinguished a man as Silas Wright might be sent out to reside at head-quarters, with an associate, "leaving me," said Scott, "half at liberty to believe, I might, myself, be the other Commissioner."[2] His fond anticipations of diplomatic successes being thus disappointed and his pride deeply affected, Scott—without waiting to find out what Trist's powers really were, or what might be the contingency upon which he was authorized to direct a suspension of hostilities—instantly wrote him from Jalapa, expressing regret that the commanding officer at Vera Cruz should have wasted a detachment to bring up the despatches, declining to have any direct agency in forwarding a sealed despatch from the Secretary of State to the Mexican government, and commenting upon the Secretary of War in very unbecoming terms.

"I see that the Secretary of War proposes to degrade me, by requiring that I, the commander of this army, shall refer to you, the

[1] Marcy to Scott, April 14, 1847; H. R. Doc., 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 940. As there was no Assistant Secretary of State until that office was created by the act of March 3, 1853 (Stat. at Large, X, 216), Trist was correctly described as next in rank to the chief of "our department of foreign affairs."

[2] *Autobiography*, 576.

chief clerk of the Department of State, the question of continuing or discontinuing hostilities. I beg to say to him and to you, that here, in the heart of a hostile country, . . . this army must take *military* security for its own safety."[1]

Scott was also foolish enough to send to the Secretary of War a copy of this reply.

If Trist had had the commonplace wisdom to refrain from a written rejoinder, matters could probably have been adjusted without further misunderstanding; but his folly was no less than that of the commanding general. He reached Jalapa on the fourteenth of May, and nearly a week later he prepared and sent to Scott (on whom he had not called) a long argument, in which he set forth in abusive and exasperating language the impropriety of Scott's refusal to obey the orders of the War Department, and explained—for the first time—that the only contingency upon which he was authorized to direct a suspension of hostilities was the ratification by the Mexican government of a definite treaty of peace between the two countries. In a second letter, delivered at the same time, he reiterated his demand that Scott should forward Buchanan's sealed note to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations.[2]

Trist's two letters were delivered to Scott on the morning of May 21, as he was about starting for Puebla. Scott had not yet had any conversation with Trist and did not open these two letters at that time; and, in fact, it does not appear whether he ever read them at all himself. From Puebla, more than a week later, he wrote an extraordinary letter to Trist, saying that he had not allowed the seal of the package to be broken until the evening of the twenty-second (the day after he received it), which he took care to have done in the presence of many staff officers. One of them at his direction then read the letters and reported to him the general character of the papers.

[1] Scott to Trist, May 7, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 814–816.

[2] Trist to Scott, May 9 and 20, 1847; *ibid.*, 813, 816. The letter from Buchanan to the Minister of Foreign Relations, which Scott declined to forward, is printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 38, and in Moore's *Buchanan*, VII, 267–270.

"My first impulse," Scott wrote, "was to return the farrago of insolence, conceit, and arrogance to the author; but, on reflection, I have determined to preserve the letters as a choice specimen of diplomatic literature and manners. The jacobin convention of France never sent to one of its armies in the field a more amiable and accomplished instrument. If you were but armed with an ambulatory guillotine you would be the personification of Danton, Marat, and St. Just, all in one.

"You tell me that you are authorised to negotiate a treaty of peace with the enemy, a declaration which, as it rests upon your own word, I might well question; and you add that it was not intended at Washington that I should have anything to do with the negotiation. This I can well believe, and certainly have cause to be thankful to the President for not degrading me by placing me in any joint commission with you."[1]

On these terms the American representatives at Puebla continued for several days, very much to the indignation and alarm of the authorities at Washington when they received copies of the ridiculous correspondence. The President was away from the capital at the time, but Marcy lost no time in writing to Scott to express his "sincere regret that a letter of such an extraordinary character" as the letter to Trist of May 7 should have been sent. He further explained fully what Trist's powers were, and expressed the hope that upon "more reflection and better information" Scott himself would have perceived his mistake.[2]

Buchanan did not write until the President returned to Washington, when the matter was brought before the cabinet, on June 12, upon the receipt of further despatches from Scott. The President thought Scott's course insubordinate and that he deserved to be removed from the command—both on account of this and also on account of certain correspondence between Scott and Perry relating to Lieutenant Semmes, of the navy, who had been sent to Scott's headquarters with the view to asking his co-operation in procuring the release of a prisoner, a passed midshipman in the navy.

[1] Scott to Trist, May 29, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 996.
[2] Marcy to Scott, May 31, 1847; *ibid.*, 960 *et seq.*

"Gen'l Scott arrogates to himself the right to be the only proper channel through whom the U. S. Government can properly communicate with the Government of Mexico on any subject; which is an assumption wholly unwarrantable & which I will not tolerate. The truth is that I have been compelled from the beginning to conduct the war against Mexico through the agency of two Gen'ls highest in rank who have not only no sympathies with the Government, but are hostile to my administration. Both of them have assumed to control the Government. To this I will not submit & will as certainly remove Gen'l Scott from the chief command as he shall refuse or delay to obey the order borne to him by Mr. Trist. My doubt is whether I shall delay to remove him until I can hear further from him."[1]

Marcy and Buchanan, in accordance with the President's decision, therefore, wrote at once to Scott and Trist, respectively, condemning in very plain language the folly of both parties and pointing out the danger to the public interests "of a violent and embittered personal quarrel between two functionaries of the Government in the enemy's country, and whilst the war is raging."[2]

The folly both of Scott and Trist was apparent enough, and so far as the latter was concerned it would have been hard to find any excuse for his want of ordinary tact and sense. For Scott, on the other hand, some excuses might be made. He had not been fully informed as to the object of Trist's mission. He was in the midst of the most harassing occupations. The questions of transport and supply, which were absolutely essential to his continuing the forward movement that he had begun with such remarkable success, were weighing constantly upon his nerves. He had good reason to believe that the government was intending to supersede him, if a plausible opportunity could be found; and his vain and supersensitive nature, at the idea of being displaced for Benton, was irritated to an extreme degree. He was always greedy for flattery, and correspondingly ir-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 58.

[2] Buchanan to Trist (in full); Moore's *Buchanan*, VII, 343, 344. Marcy to Scott, June 15, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 975. The correspondence in regard to Lieutenant Semmes, in which Scott's petulance is exhibited in almost as strange a light as in his correspondence with Trist, will be found in the latter volume, pp. 977–992.

ritable at anything he could construe into criticism or rebuke. His whole nature craved applause, and as he had not received it in what he considered adequate measure, it is not surprising to find him writing to the War Department expressing in almost feminine terms his longing for sympathy.

"Considering," he said, "the many cruel disappointments and mortifications I have been made to feel since I left Washington, or the total want of support and sympathy on the part of the War Department which I have so long experienced, I beg to be recalled from this army."[1]

Thus Scott remained for weeks at Puebla, awaiting the reinforcements whose coming was so long delayed—nervous, irritable, and suspicious. Meanwhile affairs in the city of Mexico were in a most disturbed and uncertain condition.

The disastrous result of the battle of Cerro Gordo had alarmed and angered the ruling class, though not yet to the point of deposing Santa Anna. Congress, which was still in session, was fully conscious of the President's unrivalled talents for vigorous administration, but, fearing treachery, was determined to limit his powers; and it passed an act for that purpose on April 20, immediately after receipt of the news of the battle.

This extraordinary law gave, in the first place, unlimited power to the executive in the language which had become usual in such cases.

"The supreme government," ran the statute, "is authorised to adopt all necessary measures to carry on the war, to defend the nationality of the republic, and to preserve the republican, popular, federal form of government, under which the nation is constituted."

Succeeding articles of the statute limited the general grant of power, by providing that nothing in the law should authorise the executive to make peace with the United States or to conclude any negotiation with foreign nations; and that

[1] Scott to Marcy, June 4, 1847; *Ibid.*, 904.

any treaty or arrangement which might be made with the government of the United States should be null and void. It was also provided that any individual who, either in a private capacity or as a public functionary—and whether acting on his own initiative or otherwise—should enter into communication with the government of the United States, should be deemed a traitor.[1] The result was, therefore, that Santa Anna was left free to carry on the war, but not to end it, and that he might deal as he pleased with domestic affairs, while his hands were firmly tied in dealing with foreign affairs.

This legislation no doubt reflected quite accurately the suspicious attitude of the army, based on Santa Anna's consistent lack of success in the conduct of the war. Other generals thought they saw opportunities to supplant him; and while they attacked him openly in the press they also caballed industriously in private. Anaya, the acting President, remained faithful, but Valencia, who had long commanded the troops in the city of Mexico, was reputed to be the chief of the conspirators.

However, no one in the capital had either the following or the determination necessary to overthrow Santa Anna's government, and the ship of state tossed helplessly on the troubled sea—unable to take a definite course either in the direction of peace or of effectual warfare. The ruling classes were not ready for peace—although Anaya and his cabinet were supposed to favor it—yet they could devise only the most inept plans for carrying on the war. For a month after Cerro Gordo they talked industriously, but they failed to fortify the city; and indeed it was the general belief that a defence was impracticable for want of men and money. The raising of bands of guerillas was thought to be a cheap and effective method of making war, and some were raised, but they were mere robbers and murderers, who were an annoyance but not a serious obstacle to the American forces. The systematic encouragement of desertion from Scott's army was another device in which much reliance was placed, and

[1] Law of April 20, 1847; Dublan y Lozano, V, 267, 268.

the plan was so far successful that a certain number—principally Irish Catholics—did desert at Jalapa and Puebla.

The Mexican Congress also discussed the offer of British mediation or good offices which had been made to both the United States and Mexico some months before, but which had not as yet been accepted by either. While this discussion was going on, Baranda, the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, sent a confidential message to the British minister in Mexico asking him to ascertain from General Scott whether he would consent to a temporary suspension of hostilities in case the Mexican government should accept the good offices of Great Britain.

"Such a proposition," the British minister reported to his own government, "Your Lordship may well suppose, I at once rejected; for although upon the surface it appeared simple, yet I could easily trace that the real object was to make me a sort of medium of ascertaining the views of the American General, without in the slightest degree compromising the Mexican Government—for Señor Baranda would give no guarantee that upon this, propositions would be listened to from the United States. . . . To suppose for an instant that the American Commander could in his present advantageous position be influenced by the contingency of Mexico accepting the good offices of Great Britain, or that any British Minister could make such a proposal, entirely hypothetical and without guarantee, could only be imagined by a politician of this country."[1]

A few days later Baranda returned to the subject. He wished to notify Scott that the Mexican government would receive proposals for peace on condition that Scott should not advance.

"But these proposals," as Bankhead stated, "are to be held in the utmost confidence between the parties, until the Gov^t. are enabled to dispense with the services of the Congress, and thus assume all the powers belonging to that body."

How Baranda expected to evade the penalties of the law of April 20, 1847, he did not state; but at any rate the British

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, April 30, 1847; *British F. O. MSS.* Palmerston in reply expressed his emphatic approval of Bankhead's course.

minister declined to have any hand in the matter, and said there was "a Gentleman proceeding to Jalapa to whom such communication could be confidently trusted."[1] The message, it seems, was delivered and Scott answered that if the propositions he was about to forward were not immediately accepted he should forthwith march upon the capital; but no propositions were ever sent.[2] Probably the arrival of Trist about this time interfered with Scott's intentions, whatever they were; and certainly nothing was accomplished, though endless talk still went on in Congress and on the streets of the city. The fact was that the one thing needful—a stern determination on the part of the inhabitants of the capital to pay with their persons and their property for national defence—was lacking, for they were without a leader. So far from being ready to defend the city of Mexico, there was a very general feeling of terror at the prospect of a siege and bombardment, and a strongly expressed desire that the war should be carried on in some other part of the country. In fact preparations were begun for removing the archives and establishing the seat of government at Celaya or elsewhere. But there was never a scarcity of loud talk.

"Congress," wrote J. F. Ramírez, "is a faithful representative of the people I see about me, so far as regards their *vocal* enthusiasm for making war, and the discouragement they feel in their *minds* and perhaps even in their hearts at the idea of carrying it to a conclusion. I have not the least doubt that every one of those who are preaching war to the death with such heat and fury, in Congress or through the press, and are calling every man a traitor who even talks of a truce, is convinced within himself of our absolute impotence—I will not say to carry on war with success, but even to continue it in the face of defeats; and therefore the end of the war is inevitable, whether by a treaty of peace, or as the result of conquest, *or* because the invader may retire after leaving us what he does not care to carry off. Nevertheless, I repeat, nobody talks of anything but war, and the height of absurdity is that we do not see a single one of these preachers showing the slightest wish to shoulder a musket or to contribute of his wealth to the public treasury. . . . The Texan war, which has been the pretext for former revolutions and lavish waste, is now a weapon

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, May 6, 1847 (in cipher); *ibid.*
[2] Same to same, May 29, 1847, No. 54; *ibid.*

which each of the contending parties desires to possess, that at the last they may wound their adversary." [1]

Thus the rulers of Mexico, no longer sustained by any vital belief in the success of their cause, afraid to avow their disbelief, and unwilling to make personal sacrifices, debated impotently with the enemy close at hand. So confused and helpless were they, so distracted by the dissensions between parties, back of all which was the fundamental question of the relations between church and state, that they were ready at heart to welcome any man who was prepared to propose and carry out some definite plan of action.

Nevertheless, when the news reached the capital, on the sixteenth or seventeenth of May, that Santa Anna had abandoned Puebla and was on his way to the capital, Anaya and his ministers, instead of being ready to welcome his coming, were much perplexed as to how he should be received. Feared and detested by many, but looked upon by most as the one man capable of dealing with the crisis, the presence of Santa Anna in the capital at the head of affairs might, it was thought, lead to serious disturbances, and the administration concluded to send out a small committee to intercept him and ascertain precisely what were his intentions, and to delay his entrance into the city until suitable preparations could be made. The committee met Santa Anna at Ayotla, a village about eighteen miles southeast from the city. Santa Anna at first agreed to wait there, and sent a letter expressing his willingness to resign his offices as commander-in-chief and President of the republic if that were the desire of the government;[2] but two hours after sending off the letter he changed his mind, owing, as reported, to the influence of his old friend Tornel. He therefore arrived in the city of Mexico upon the heels of the committee, late at night on the evening of the eighteenth of May.[3]

[1] Ramírez to Elorriaga, April 25, 1847; *México durante su Guerra con los E. U.* (García, *Documentos Inéditos*, III, 234.)

[2] Text in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 664.

[3] Ramírez, who was one of the committee, gives a full account of the interview and of Santa Anna's subsequent proceedings.—(García, *op. cit.*, III, 236-237.)

Two days after his arrival he summoned a meeting of all the general officers then present in the city of Mexico and submitted to them certain questions, which were freely discussed and put to a vote. It was unanimously agreed, first, that the war must be continued, and, second, that the capital of the republic should *not* be abandoned. A third and more difficult question was as to the method of defending the city. The general plan of military operations adopted at the meeting was that strong detachments should be posted along the line which the American army must traverse in order to march upon the capital, which detachments were to form the first line of defence; that the second line was to be formed in the neighborhood of the capital itself; that the engineers were to prepare a plan of fortifications for both lines; that additional bodies of troops should be organized to attack the enemy in flank on his advance; that the various guerilla bands should act in combination with such detachments; that an Army of the East should be formed, composed of the militia of the southern and eastern states under the orders of General Bravo, with General Rincon as second in command;[1] that the Army of the North should be reinforced by additional levies in the northern and western states, General Valencia remaining at its head, with General Salas as second in command; and finally, that the city of Mexico should be the general base of operations.

These points having been disposed of, Santa Anna gravely informed the assembled generals that, in spite of his requests to be permitted to withdraw from a share in public affairs, the acting President (Anaya) had insisted on Santa Anna's taking over the Presidency; that he had reluctantly consented to make this new sacrifice; and that he would now take up the reins of government.[2]

On the day after this meeting Santa Anna attended a session of Congress and solemnly swore to the Constitution of

[1] Bravo and Rincon resigned the command of the Army of the East a few days later, and it was intrusted to General Lombardini, who had commanded one of Santa Anna's divisions at Buena Vista.

[2] Minutes of meeting of generals on May 20, 1847; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 83 *et seq.*

1824 and to an act passed May 18, 1847, known as the law of constitutional reforms (*Acta de Reformas Constitucionales*), in which that Constitution was readopted with some minor modifications;[1] and on the day after taking the oath (May 22, 1847) he issued a manifesto to the nation. He began by eulogizing his own activity and zeal in going out to meet the enemy at Cerro Gordo, and expressed his regret at having found an absolute indifference to the welfare of the nation in the city of Puebla, and explained the consequent necessity he was under of pursuing his march to the capital in order to defend and save it at all hazards.

"My return to the exercise of the Presidency," he continued, "during the few days which will elapse before the new election, has been an accident and also a necessity, due to the refusal of the modest and earnest patriot—who has so worthily governed during my absence on the campaign—to continue in office. Compelled, in spite of my most strenuous resistance, to take up the direction of affairs, I at once submitted the question of defending the capital to the deliberation of all the generals now here; and that policy was unanimously agreed to, after considering not less the rules of the art of war, than the desirability of avoiding the risk of suffering which might be caused to the population by the enemy's projectiles. . . . The cooperation of all classes of society and of all its individuals is now essential. The clergy cannot in conscience consent to the domination of a people who admit, as a dogma of their policy, the toleration of all religious sects. Is the clergy prepared to permit Protestant churches to be erected in the face of the very temple in which the Host is adored? The sacrifice of a portion of its property may preserve it from losing the rest, and, along with that, the privileges which our laws respect and which those of the United States do not allow. Are the owners of property aware how harsh and exacting are the decrees of the conqueror? . . . The moment has arrived to risk all in order to save all. Alas, that the gravity of the situation is so little understood!"[2]

Santa Anna's next step was to address himself with extraordinary vigor and success to the fortification of the ap-

[1] Dublan y Lozano, V, 275–279. It seems to have been then the opinion of some members of Congress that the formal restoration of the Constitution would be an implied repeal of the act of April 20, 1847, giving the executive extraordinary powers.

[2] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 666.

proaches to the city and the raising and organisation of a new army. It had been his first purpose to attempt arresting Scott's advance at some distant point; but though some intrenchments were begun, the only works actually completed were either at the gates of the city itself or within a radius of seven or eight miles.

At the same time measures were taken to raise money by contributions from the state governments; the capital was declared to be in a "state of siege," under the general commanding the Army of the East; the Army of the North was sent for from San Luis Potosí; "national guards" were organized; large numbers of recruits were obtained and armed with such muskets as could be supplied, and ammunition and artillery of fairly good quality were manufactured.

But long before Santa Anna's preparations were complete, renewed efforts were made to bring about negotiations for peace, the initiative this time coming from Trist, who had grown tired of waiting. He also, like Baranda, had recourse to the British legation as an intermediary, and his doing so likewise rested on the British offer of mediation or good offices.

In the previous month of September Trist, then acting temporarily as Secretary of State in Buchanan's absence, had received a visit from Pakenham, the British minister in Washington, who said he had been directed to ascertain whether the mediation of England would be accepted by the United States with a view to terminating the war. Trist was instructed by Polk to reply verbally that, while the President—

"would deem it unnecessary & inexpedient to accept the formal mediation of a Foreign Power, he would regard with favour any influence which the good offices of Great Brittain or any other Power might exert with the Authorities of Mexico to dispose them to accept the overture which has been made by the United States to enter upon negotiations with a view to an equitable adjustment of the existing differences between the two countries and the restoration of a permanent peace."[1]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, II, 129–133.

When, therefore, Trist found that General Scott declined to forward Buchanan's letter to the Minister of Foreign Relations, it very naturally occurred to him to have it transmitted through the British legation; and for this purpose he managed to send a letter from Puebla to Bankhead in Mexico, inquiring whether the latter would deliver the letter from Buchanan to the Minister of Foreign Relations, and make known verbally, at the same time, the presence of an American diplomatic agent at Scott's head-quarters. In reply, the British minister sent one of his attachés to Puebla, an amiable young gentleman who had recently graduated from the University of Cambridge, Mr. Edward Thornton, to communicate with Trist.[1]

Thornton, after escaping safely from the guerillas on the road—from whom, as he reported, he ran serious risks—arrived in Puebla on the tenth of June and had separate interviews with Trist and Scott, who were still not on speaking terms. To Trist he explained pretty fully the political situation in the capital.

"I told him," said Thornton, "that Señor Baranda who had frequently expressed a desire to discover some means of entering into Negotiations with the United States' Government, though he did not think it expedient, or did not possess courage sufficient, to avow it publickly, had resigned his office two days before the receipt of his letter, and that as yet the President had named no successor to him. . . .

"I observed to Mr. Trist that the Grant of the United States Congress of three Millions of Dollars for the conclusion of a Treaty of Peace had been attended with bad consequences in this Country, as it was universally supposed that that sum was destined to bribe certain Members of the Government; but that if on the conclusion of a Treaty of Peace a sum of Money could be placed in the hands of the Mexican Government it would materially assist them in keeping in awe all such as were opposed to the renewal of friendly relations."

Trist explained that the use of the three million dollars in bribery was impossible, as vouchers would have to be laid

[1] Trist to Bankhead, June 6, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 181–183. Mr. Thornton was subsequently Sir Edward Thornton, G.C.B., for many years British minister in Washington.

before Congress; but that "on the favourable conclusion of the treaty, a sum of money would be placed at the command of the Mexican Government." He disclaimed any idea of a permanent conquest, but explained that if peace were not speedily made the demands of the American government might be raised. He ended by confiding Buchanan's note to Thornton, on the understanding that it was to be left to Bankhead to deliver it or not, as he might "observe a disposition or otherwise to enter into Negotiations."[1]

As to the interview with Scott, Thornton was rather reticent in the official report of his mission, but writing to a friend in the Foreign Office (presumably Addington) he was more outspoken.

"I found," he said, "Mr. Trist and General Scott not speaking to each other; this is unfortunate, more especially as Genl Santa Anna has discovered the fact; I imagine their quarrel dates from Mr. Trist's arrival in this country, when he forwarded Mr. Buchanan's Note to Head Quarters to be sent to Mexico; which however Genl Scott either refused or neglected to do, on the ground that there was no Government here, a circumstance which was far from being correct. Long before my first journey to Puebla, I had a strong suspicion that Rejon had been intriguing with Genl Scott; the object of his intrigues being to bring his party, called here of the 'puros,' into power with the assistance of the American Army."

After some remarks on other subjects, Thornton's conversation with Scott again returned to Rejón.

"Genl Scott likewise expressed much surprise at my having a bad opinion of Rejon (Heaven knows not without reason) his own being evidently otherwise, and I know that Rejon's name has been long familiar among the Genl's staff."[2]

Thornton was soon back in the city of Mexico bearing Buchanan's note of April 15, and also a verbose note to Bankhead from Trist, which repeated in substance what he had told Thornton;[3] and Bankhead lost no time in delivering the messages with which he had thus been charged.

[1] Thornton's report to Bankhead, June 14, 1847; copy enclosed with despatch of Bankhead to Palmerston, June 26, 1847, No. 61; *F. O. MSS.*
[2] Thornton to [Addington?], June 29, 1847; *F. O. MSS., Mexico*, vol. 213.
[3] Trist to Bankhead, June 11, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 184.

"Having previously ascertained," he reported, "that General Santa Anna would consent favourably to receive the letter from Mr. Secretary Buchanan, and as I knew that there was a very large party in Congress favourable to peace, I addressed a private Note to Señor Ibarra, who has been just named Secretary of State, enclosing the American Minister's letter, and expressing my earnest hope that favourable results would spring from it.—It was forthwith translated and given to General Santa Anna, who expressed himself to Mr. Thornton as anxious for the arrangement of the difficulties between the two countries, and promised that as soon as it was possible to collect a sufficient number of Ministers (sic) together to form a house, he would submit the Note to Congress, and would use his best endeavours for its immediate and favourable consideration. I must say that those endeavours appear to have been faithfully carried out; but such is the extraordinary impracticable character of this people that for the past four days, the Government have been unable to collect a sufficient number to constitute a house.

"In the meantime Señor Ibarra has transmitted through me a letter addressed to Mr. Secretary Buchanan, couched in polite terms and promising the earliest attention of Government through Congress to the contents of that Note."[1]

Thornton took Ibarra's note to Puebla, where he arrived on June 24, and notified Trist and Scott of the fact that a special session of Congress had been called to consider the subject of negotiations for peace. Incidentally, his visit coincided with and may have been in part the cause of a reconciliation between these two adversaries.

On June 25 letters were exchanged between them, copies of which have not been preserved, but the tenor of which may readily be inferred. A month later Trist, writing to the Secretary of State, declared that he had misconceived Scott's character, whose "conduct has been characterized by the purest public spirit, and a fidelity and devotion which could not be surpassed to the views of the Government"; and Scott wrote to the War Department that since about June 26 a happy change had occurred in his relations with Trist, and that "our intercourse has been frequent and cordial; and I have found him able, discreet, courteous, and amiable."

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, June 26, 1847, No. 61; *F. O. MSS.* Ibarra's note, dated June 22, 1847, is printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 40.

Both expressed a willingness that their letters should be removed from the files of the department; and thus ended the absurd quarrel which had delayed for at least six weeks any possibility of negotiations with Mexico, at a time when conceivably that government might have been very willing to consider terms of peace.[1]

Santa Anna's decision to leave to Congress the consideration of Buchanan's note was due, of course, to the law of April 20, under which an attempt by the executive to open negotiations with the American government was declared to be an act of treason; and though Santa Anna would probably not have hesitated to violate any statute if he had felt strong enough to do so, he did not dare, in this instance, to fly in the face of an act of Congress which represented the feelings of at least a large part of the ruling class, and a violation of which would undoubtedly have been seized upon by his enemies as a sufficient excuse for a revolution.

Secretly, however, he endeavored to make something out of the situation, and word was sent to Trist by persons in the city of Mexico who represented themselves to be agents of the President, to the effect that it would be possible to agree upon terms of peace if Santa Anna had a million dollars at his disposal payable on the signing of the treaty, and that he must also have ten thousand dollars on account, payable forthwith. If these conditions were complied with, he would agree to name Mexican commissioners who should open official negotiations. The million dollars was to be a secret payment, not included in the text of the treaty; and it would seem that it was understood that the ten thousand dollars to be paid down were to be used to overcome the resistance of members of Congress.[2]

The suggestion appealed both to Scott and Trist, who were

[1] Trist to Buchanan, July 23; Scott to Marcy, July 25, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 890, 1011. It was understood at the time in the army that General Persifor F. Smith, with whom Trist had been living at Puebla, was the peace-maker who brought the two irascible gentlemen together.

[2] "The English Minister is engaged in bringing about a peace. He gives the opinion that a bribe is absolutely indispensable. The Spanish Minister is said to have given the same opinion. Our agents in this business are Englishmen." —(Hitchcock, 368.)

alike eager to terminate the war and showed no scruples as to the method of doing so. They called General Pillow, as the President's next friend, into their councils, and he also, after some hesitation, expressed his approval, and agreed that it was upon the whole expedient to open the negotiation on these terms rather than to march on Mexico and run the risk of another battle. The ten thousand dollars stipulated for were therefore immediately paid over from the secret service money which General Scott had at his disposal, and correspondence seems to have been secretly and actively continued between Trist, on the one hand, and the reputed agents of Santa Anna, on the other.[1] Santa Anna, however, was now reported as being reluctant to carry out the understanding, and Scott was informed that until the American troops could take up a position near the city of Mexico Santa Anna would not be in a position to undertake negotiations.[2]

The reason why Santa Anna hesitated was undoubtedly because he had discovered that he could not control Congress, and that they would neither give their consent to opening negotiations nor allow Santa Anna to undertake them on his own responsibility. His Secretary of State, Ibarra, had written on the twenty-second of June that Congress must decide as to a treaty of peace, and must "deter-

[1] On July 16 Scott informed some of his principal officers as to these negotiations. Pillow "came out very fully and eloquently" in support of bribing Santa Anna, and Twiggs also approved it. Quitman and Shields dissented, and Cadwalader said nothing.—(Hitchcock, 267.) Trist was careful not to report these secret negotiations to the State Department. When Buchanan learned of them through the newspapers, he wrote a severe and well-deserved rebuke to Trist for his share in "a transaction which would cover with merited disgrace all those who may have participated in it."—(Buchanan to Trist, Dec. 21, 1847; Moore's *Buchanan*, VII, 484.) A similar letter was sent by Marcy to Scott, and inquiries were made of other general officers as to the facts. But the war was over by the time their answers were received, and it seems to have been thought best to let the matter drop. See Polk's *Diary*, III, 245, 251, 261, 341, 384, 388; IV, 196. Quitman, I, 316–320.

[2] Trist reported to Buchanan that he was informed Santa Anna was afraid to make peace at that time, and would first allow the American army to advance close to the capital; but that he talked of "taking the matter into his own hands in a military way," *i. e.*, making himself dictator. Of course, Trist said nothing about a bribe.—(Trist to Buchanan, July 20, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.*)

mine what should be deemed most proper on that subject";[1] but Congress had been in no hurry to assume such dangerous responsibilities, so that it was not until the thirteenth of July that a quorum was secured and the peace proposals of the President of the United States were laid before the members. By this time Iturra had ceased to hold office, after a tenure of only three or four weeks, and Santa Anna, through Ramon Pacheco, his new Minister of Relations, addressed a communication to Congress on July 16, urging the importance of their taking some definite stand.[2]

The subject was thereupon referred by Congress to a committee, and the committee reported that under the Constitution of 1824 the executive was authorized to conduct all diplomatic negotiations and to make all treaties—whether of peace or of any other nature—although before ratification of them he must obtain the approbation of the General Congress; so that the subject was entirely within the jurisdiction of the President.[3] The committee also reported that all extraordinary powers conferred by the constituent Congress had ceased upon the readoption of the Constitution under the *Acta de Reformas* of May 18, 1847, and that so much of the law of April 20 as limited the prerogatives of the executive had become inoperative. They therefore declared that Congress had no power to act.

The whole controversy, of course, turned, in form upon the technical question whether the readoption of the Constitution of 1824 by the *Acta de Reformas* in May had impliedly repealed the statute of April; but in reality Santa Anna's effort was to persuade Congress to assume a share of the responsibility in undertaking negotiations, while the effort of Congress was to put the whole of the responsibility upon Santa Anna. The difficulty would have been solved by a short act either repealing or re-enacting, in so many words, the law of April 20; but the Congress could not bring itself

[1] Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 40.
[2] A full summary of Pacheco's communication will be found in Sen. Doc. 32, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 302 *et seq.*
[3] Constitution of 1824, sec. 110, subd. XIV; Dublan y Lozano, II, 730.

to adopt either course, so that the subject was eventually laid on the table and nothing was done in regard to it.[1]

The character of the opposition was perfectly well understood from the first. Writing a fortnight before Congress actually met, Bankhead expressed his opinion very frankly.

"The whole affair," he wrote, "has been one of those miserable intrigues by which questions of importance are delayed and beneficial measures rendered unavailable. No one possesses moral courage enough to take a due share of responsibility upon himself. General Santa Anna on the one hand, is desirous of leaving the decision to Congress, while, on the other, that Assembly is anxious to throw any of the odium which might attach to the measure upon the shoulders of the Executive."[2]

A month later Thornton wrote privately to Trist on the same subject as follows:

"You will no doubt have been amused at the mutual endeavours of Congress and Santa Anna to put the responsibility of entering into negotiations upon each other; so far, Congress have succeeded; for although S. A. addressed them the plain question of whether they wished peace or war, he was unable to make them meet to give him an answer; since that time he has been saying to several people, and among the number to Mr. Mackintosh, that he must let General Scott advance, even close up to Mexico and since he is now abandoned by Congress must then as military chief endeavour to make peace. There is no doubt that he is very anxious for peace, for he knows well what will be the fate of his army if he risks another battle; but he has many difficulties to contend with, and many enemies who are raising a war cry merely for the purpose of bringing on his overthrow; the principal of these is Valencia, who returned two days ago from the North with 4,000 men."[3]

And thus the subject of peace negotiations was dropped in consequence of the inability of Santa Anna and the Congress to agree, to be resumed some three weeks later under circumstances far less favorable to Mexico. But meanwhile Scott had prepared a memorandum, a copy of which is

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 670.

[2] Bankhead to Palmerston, June 29, 1847, No. 67; *F. O. MSS.*

[3] Thornton to Trist, July 29, 1847; copy of note enclosed with Trist's official despatch No. 10 of July 31, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.*

said to have been given to Santa Anna, in which, according to Colonel Hitchcock,

"he stated that he would advance upon the capital, and would either defeat the enemy in view of the city, if they would give him battle, or he would take a strong position from the enemy, and then, if he could restrain the enthusiasm of his troops, he would halt outside the city and take measures to give those in the city an opportunity to save the capital by making a peace."[1]

How closely Scott kept the promise of his memorandum will be seen hereafter.[2]

[1] Ethan Allen Hitchcock was lieutenant-colonel of the third (regular) infantry, and was acting as inspector-general on Scott's staff. He wrote for the newspapers in January, 1848, a carefully guarded account of the negotiations at Puebla, which, of course, represents what General Scott desired to have the public know of the affair, and from that letter the above quotation is taken. The letter will be found in Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 521–532.

[2] Rumors of Scott's secret dealings with Santa Anna seem to have become known in the city of Mexico, and to have added to the deep distrust with which the latter was regarded. For a general account of the transaction, reference may be made to Ros Bárcena, 283–288; Ripley, II, 148–163. Ripley was at this time a first lieutenant in the second regiment of artillery, and had taken part in the battle of Cerro Gordo, commanding the small detachment on the south side of the river. He also took part in the subsequent battles of the war as aid to General Pillow. His account of the negotiations between Scott and Trist, on the one hand, and Santa Anna's agents, on the other, may be regarded as representing the knowledge which Pillow got from his conversations with Scott and Trist.

# CHAPTER XLIV

## CONTRERAS

SIXTEEN weeks elapsed between the day of Cerro Gordo and the day when Scott was ready to move forward from Puebla, but the time had not been wasted. The troops had been constantly drilled, the health of the men had improved by their long stay in the mountains, reinforcements and recruits had arrived, and by the first week in August not only had the numbers of the American army been restored, but it had been brought to a higher state of efficiency.

The reinforcements had come after exasperating delays. Colonel Childs, with the garrison from Jalapa, had been ordered up as early as June 3; but he had been instructed to wait for detachments from Vera Cruz, and he therefore waited, first for a party of recruits that was coming up under Colonel McIntosh and subsequently for General Cadwalader, who had reached Vera Cruz with his brigade in the month of June. Both McIntosh and Cadwalader had some trouble with guerrilleros not far from Vera Cruz. Having safely reached Perote, they in turn waited until General Pillow (who had been promoted to the rank of major-general) was sufficiently recovered from his wound to be able to take the field; and finally the whole body started from Perote on July 1, reaching Puebla on July 8.[1] Scott then had under him 8,061 effectives, rank and file, besides 2,302 reported sick.[2]

In the meantime, however, it was reported that Brigadier-General Franklin Pierce had arrived at Vera Cruz with a

[1] The details of Pillow's march from Jalapa to Puebla are given in *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 215–220. And see Ripley, II, 130–139; Brooks, *A Complete History of the Mexican War*, 445–452.

[2] Scott to Marcy, July 25, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1013.

strong detachment of the new "regular" troops, and Scott, after some hesitation, decided to wait for him also before attempting an advance. Pierce and his brigade arrived at Vera Cruz on June 27, 1847, where they found the yellow-fever raging fearfully and the city everywhere appearing "like the very habitation of pestilence." Pierce at once moved his men to Vergara, about two miles north of Vera Cruz, and there encamped on the beach, waiting for transportation; but notwithstanding his best exertions he was delayed until the middle of July, his men suffering a good deal from sickness. When at last he started he was attacked by guerrilleros near the National Bridge, but had little difficulty in driving them away; by the twenty-first of the month he was at Santa Anna's hacienda of Manga de Clavo; and he reached Puebla on August 7 with twenty-four hundred men in good order and without the loss of a single wagon. Some of his men, however, had been wounded on the road, and they had also experienced a good deal of sickness, due, as he thought, to "excessive indulgence in fruits, which it was found impossible to keep from the troops."[1]

In anticipation of Pierce's arrival Scott had carefully made his preparations for the march into the valley of Mexico, and with a force numbering in all 10,738, rank and file,[2] he now set forth to meet an enemy who, he believed, might "amount to some thirty-odd thousand, including good, bad, and indifferent."[3] His communications with his base at Vera Cruz had long been difficult. He now determined to sever them altogether. "Isolated and abandoned," as he thought himself, he made up his mind "to throw away the scabbard and to advance with the naked blade in hand."[4] The memory of Cortés and his ships never left Scott's mind, and with a boldness which subsequent events fully justified he advanced, like the *conquistadores*, without the possibility of retreat or reinforcement, to attempt the capture of a popu-

[1] Hawthorne's *Life of Franklin Pierce*, 68–94. His account of Pierce's march consists largely of extracts from the latter's journal.
[2] Scott to Marcy, Sept. 18, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 384.
[3] Same to same, July 25, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1013.
[4] Same to same, Feb. 24, 1848; *ibid.*, 1223; Scott's *Autobiography*, 460.

lous city, the capital of a country of seven million inhabitants.

The city of Puebla was left in charge of a small garrison of three hundred and ninety-three men, consisting of one small company of cavalry, two of regular artillery, and six companies of Pennsylvania volunteers, all under command of Colonel Childs, of the regular army. There were, in addition, eighteen hundred sick in the hospital, of whom many were convalescent, besides a number of civil employees. Childs also had available for defence a considerable amount of captured artillery.[1]

Scott's staff was numerous and well organized, and his engineers in particular were remarkable for their character and attainments. Almost all of them subsequently acquired brilliant military reputations. They were Major John Lind Smith, Captain Robert E. Lee, and Lieutenants P. G. T. Beauregard, Isaac I. Stevens, Z. B. Tower, Gustavus W. Smith, George B. McClellan, and John G. Foster.

The army was organized into four infantry divisions, with a cavalry brigade under Colonel Harney, consisting of detachments from the first, second, and third regiments of dragoons. The first division, under General Worth, consisted of the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth regiments of regular infantry, the second and third regiments of artillery serving as infantry, and two batteries of field artillery. It was divided into two brigades, under Colonels Garland and Clarke, of the regular army, respectively.

The second division, under General Twiggs, consisted of the rifle regiment, the first and fourth artillery serving as infantry, the first, third, and seventh regular infantry, and one battery of field artillery. It was divided into two brigades; the first under General Persifor F. Smith, the second under Colonel Bennet Riley, of the regular army.

The fourth division, under General Quitman, consisted of volunteers—New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina—with a battalion of marines. The New York and South Carolina regiments formed one brigade, under General

[1] Childs's report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 471.

Shields, the marines and the Pennsylvania volunteers another brigade, under Colonel Watson.

Finally, the third division, under General Pillow, was made up of the two brigades which had last arrived. The first brigade, under General Cadwalader, consisted of the "voltigeurs" and the newly raised eleventh and fourteenth regiments, with Magruder's battery of field artillery.[1] The second brigade, under General Pierce, comprised the new ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth regiments of "regular" infantry.[2]

Pillow's two brigadiers deserve attention, for they were types of the men whom the American military system of that day placed in high command. They were both lawyers of distinction, both, of course, Democrats, and each was about forty-two years of age. George Cadwalader was a native of Philadelphia, and was descended from a family whose members had achieved distinction in the Revolutionary War, but he was as yet without other military antecedents. Franklin Pierce was also the son of a soldier of the Revolution who had been a governor of New Hampshire. He had graduated at Bowdoin College in the class of 1824; had served nine years in both houses of Congress, where he had been an ardent supporter of Jackson and Van Buren; and had resigned from the Senate in 1842. After retiring from Congress he had enjoyed a successful legal practice in New Hampshire, serving as United States district attorney. He had declined a reappointment to the Senate to fill a vacancy, and had also declined the appointment of Attorney-General of the United States. When the war broke out Pierce had enlisted as a private in the New Hampshire battalion of volunteers raised under the call of November, 1846, where he had his first experience in military drill; and on March 3, 1847, he was appointed brigadier-general, to command one of the brigades of the new regular troops raised for the war.

[1] Magruder's battery was formed from the men of the first artillery regiment, and was armed with guns taken from the Mexicans at the battle of Cerro Gordo. "Stonewall" Jackson was the junior lieutenant of the battery.

[2] Further details as to the organisation of the army will be found in Scott's *Autobiography*, 460–465.

Everything being ready at last, the march from Puebla began on the morning of August 7, the cavalry brigade and Twiggs's division leading the way. A little before sunrise the troops were drawn up in the plaza in the presence of nearly the whole population of the city, who had turned out to witness their departure. The general, to quote an eye-witness,

> "took off his hat, and waving it around his head—his white locks giving him the appearance of some inspired old patriarch—shouted forth in the voice of a Stentor: 'Now, my lads, give them a Cerro Gordo shout!' A simultaneous hurrah arose on the morning air, from twenty-five hundred brazen throats, that shook the walls of the palace and must have given a death-blow to the hopes of any Mexican patriots who were looking on. The cry was joined in and prolonged by the by-standers of the other corps, and before its echoes had died away, the division, with its bands playing and banners flying, was in motion. It was, indeed, a thrilling spectacle to behold this vanguard of the American army moving to the conquest of Mexico."[1]

The next day Quitman's division marched out, and it was followed on the ninth and tenth of August by Worth's and Pillow's divisions. General Scott himself left Puebla on the eighth with Quitman, but he soon overtook and continued with Twiggs. The various corps were at no time beyond five hours—seven or eight miles—apart, which Scott considered "supporting distance"; and that they were sufficiently near was proved by the entire failure of the Mexican cavalry to annoy them. The army, therefore, marched forward without interruption, precisely as Cortés had advanced three hundred and twenty-eight years before. Like Cortés, they found at one point that the road had been obstructed by felling trees and by some beginnings of intrenchments; but they pushed forward through Texmelúcan and Rio Frio, north of the great snow mountain of Istaccihuatl, to a point nearly ten thousand five hundred feet above the sea. On the third day after leaving Puebla each division came in succession to the summit of the pass.

[1] Semmes, 220.

"They had not advanced far, when, turning an angle of the sierra, they suddenly came on a view which more than compensated the toils of the preceding day. It was that of the Valley of Mexico, or Tenochtitlan, as more commonly called by the natives; which, with its picturesque assemblage of water, woodland, and cultivated plains, its shining cities and shadowy hills, was spread out like some gay and gorgeous panorama before them. In the highly rarefied atmosphere of these upper regions, even remote objects have a brilliancy of coloring and a distinctness of outline which seem to annihilate distance. Stretching far away at their feet, were seen noble forests of oak, sycamore, and cedar, and beyond, yellow fields of maize and the towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens; for flowers, in such demand for their religious festivals, were even more abundant in this populous valley than in other parts of Anahuac. In the centre of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present, their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets, and, in the midst,—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls,—the fair city of Mexico."[1]

In the eyes of Scott's engineers the most conspicuous and interesting feature of the landscape was the chain of shallow lakes which lie on the southern and southeasterly sides of the city of Mexico, and which in 1847 had so shrunk as to leave near their margins wide stretches of swampy meadow that proved, upon near approach, to be impassable by artillery or wagons.

The direct road from Puebla, winding down from the mountain heights near the conspicuous and snow-covered mass of Iztaccihuatl, passed along the northeasterly shore of Lake Chalco, the southernmost in the chain of lakes, and then upon an ancient causeway over the isthmus lying between Lakes Xochimilco and Texcoco. On this isthmus a rocky hill known as the Peñon Viejo was made strong by every device of the engineering art. The direct access to the city was thus controlled by what was believed to be an impregnable position, and the isthmus was further strengthened by strong works thrown up round the neighboring village of Mexicalcingo.

[1] Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, II, 51. Scott's line of march was not, at this part of his route, exactly that of Cortés, who crossed by the pass south of Iztaccihuatl, between it and Popocatepetl.

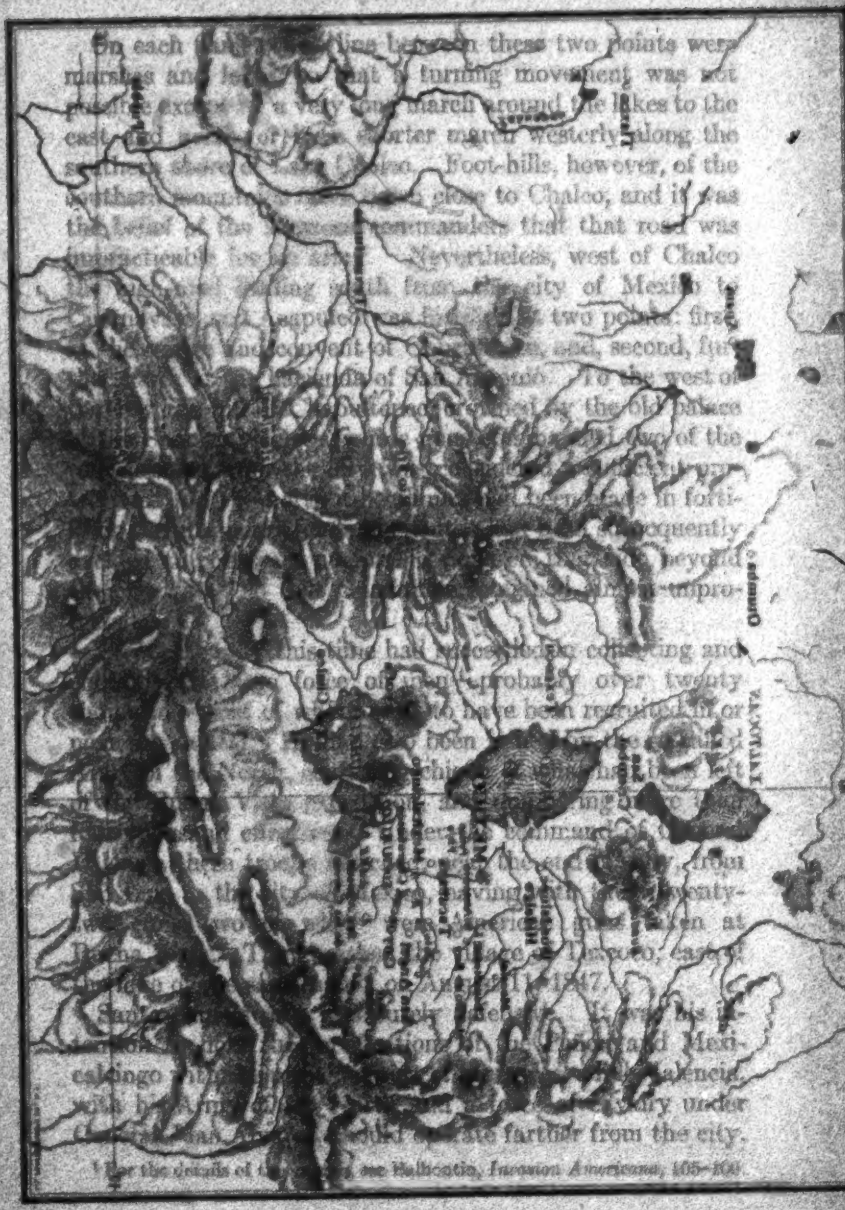
On each flank of the line between these two points were marshes and lakes, so that a turning movement was not possible except by a very long march around the lakes to the east and north, or by a shorter march westerly along the southern shore of Lake Chalco. Foot-hills, however, of the southern mountains came down close to Chalco, and it was the belief of the Mexican commanders that that road was impracticable for an army. Nevertheless, west of Chalco the high-road leading south from the city of Mexico to Cuernavaca and Acapulco was fortified at two points: first, at the bridge and convent of Churubusco, and, second, further south at the hacienda of San Antonio. To the west of the city the hill of Chapultepec, crowned by the old palace of the Spanish viceroys, whose guns commanded two of the roads issuing from the city, was considered a sufficient protection. On the north a beginning had been made in fortifying the hills near Guadalupe, but it had been subsequently decided to construct no fortifications on that side beyond the city gates, so that Guadalupe remained almost unprotected.

Santa Anna by this time had succeeded in collecting and equipping a large force of men—probably over twenty thousand—most of whom seem to have been recruited in or near the capital. He had also been joined by the so-called Army of the North, consisting chiefly of what had been left of the Buena Vista expedition, and numbering more than four thousand effectives. Under the command of General Valencia these troops marched, near the end of July, from San Luis to the city of Mexico, having with them twenty-two guns, two of which were American guns taken at Buena Vista. They reached the village of Texcoco, east of the lake of the same name, on August 11, 1847.[1]

Santa Anna's plan was purely defensive. It was his intention to hold the fortifications of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo with the principal part of his forces, while Valencia, with his Army of the North and a force of cavalry under General Juan Alvarez, should operate farther from the city.

[1] For the details of this march, see Balbontin, *Invasion Americana*, 105–109.

THE VALLEY OF MEXICO




On each [illegible] between these two points were marshes and [illegible] that a turning movement was not [illegible] a very [illegible] around the lakes to the east [illegible] of these [illegible] westerly along the [illegible] Foot-hills, however, of the [illegible] close to Chalco, and it was [illegible] remarkable that that road was [illegible] Nevertheless, west of Chalco [illegible] city of Mexico by [illegible] two points: first, [illegible] and, second, [illegible] To the west of [illegible] the old palace [illegible] of the [illegible] in fortified [illegible] frequently [illegible] beyond [illegible] impro- [illegible] which had [illegible] connecting and [illegible] probably over twenty [illegible] have been [illegible] or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The orders were that Valencia should hold Texcoco and watch the advance of the American army, and fall back to Guadalupe if Scott advanced east of the lake of Texcoco, and, in case he invested the Peñon, to attack him in the rear. The cavalry of Alvarez was to remain in camp near Atlixco, twenty miles southwest of Puebla, but as soon as Scott advanced beyond Texmelúcan, Alvarez was to follow, annoying the enemy whenever possible and attacking vigorously when he saw him involved in an attempt on any one of the fortified points near the city. Should he attack the Peñon, Alvarez was to join Valencia.[1]

On the same day that Valencia, coming from Guadalupe, occupied Texcoco, August 11, Scott, with Harney's cavalry and Twiggs's infantry, reached the village of Ayotla, in front of the Mexican lines, where he halted and at once began careful reconnoissances of Santa Anna's fortified positions on the line of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo.

"The reconnaissances of the twelfth and thirteenth," as Captain Lee of the corps of engineers wrote home, "satisfied us of the strength of the enemy's defences in our front. Their principal defence was at El Peñon, commanding the causeway between the Lakes of Tescuco and Chalco. The hill of El Peñon is about three hundred feet high, having three plateaus, of different elevations. It stands in the waters of Lake Tescuco. Its base is surrounded by a dry trench, and its sides arranged with breastworks, from its base to its crest. It was armed with thirty pieces of cannon, and defended by 7,000 men under Santa Anna in person. The causeway passed directly by its base; the waters of the lake washing each side of the causeway for two miles in front, and the whole distance, seven miles, to the city. There was a battery on the causeway, about four hundred yards in advance of the Peñon; another by its side; a third a mile in front of the entrance to the city, and a fourth at the entrance. About two miles in front of the Peñon a road branched off to the left, and crossed the outlet of Lake Hochimillico [Xochimilco], at the village of Mexicalcingo, six

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 146–150. Alvarez, who commanded the cavalry, subsequently became President of Mexico and incurred the enmity of Santa Anna, who, in his memoirs, gives him the worst character. He was, says Santa Anna, a monster of cruelty and known as "the panther of the South," and was also a coward. Santa Anna says he was of African descent on the mother's side.—(*Mi Historia*, 101–103.) But see Bancroft's *Mexico*, V, 666–674, where Alvarez is well spoken of.

miles from the main road. This village, surrounded by a marsh, was enveloped in batteries, and only approached over a paved causeway, a mile in length; beyond, the causeway continued through the marsh for two miles further, and opened upon terra firma at the village of Churubusco."[1]

The garrison of the Peñon was in large part composed of volunteers from the city of Mexico, consisting of four newly raised battalions known respectively as Victoria, Hidalgo, Independencia, and Bravo, the first two being composed mostly of men of good families and some social position, and the two latter of artisans and mechanics. It had been previously announced that upon the approach of the American troops a single alarm gun should be fired in the city as a signal recalling to every Mexican between fifteen and sixty years old the duty of presenting himself with or without arms at the fortified points of the capital, in accordance with an order issued by the Minister of War. Early in the morning of August 9 rumors had been in circulation that the American vanguard had moved from Puebla, and a great number of people of all classes assembled in and about the National Palace, waiting impatiently for the sound of the alarm gun. At two o'clock in the afternoon the signal was given, and it was immediately greeted by enthusiastic cheers for the republic and the President, and cries of death to the enemies of the country, while at the same time the bands of music of the various bodies of troops struck up popular airs. The head-quarters of the battalions of the national guard were soon crowded with people coming to enlist, and Santa Anna issued a patriotic proclamation calling upon the people of Mexico to "imitate the virtues of their Spanish ancestors and show themselves the heroes of the new world." The clergy lent their presence and encouragement to the volunteers, who marched out at once over the seven miles from the city to the Peñon, where their camp for several days was visited by numbers of well-to-do people who regarded the occasion as a sort of agreeable picnic. General Bravo,

[1] Captain R. E. Lee to Mrs. Totten, Aug. 22, 1847; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 461.

meanwhile, had assumed command at Mexicalcingo, and the Mexican forces awaited, with something, for the moment, like general enthusiasm, the expected attack by the American invaders.[1]

While Scott was pushing his reconnoissances in front of Ayotla the other divisions of his army were arriving, and they encamped in his rear along the shores of Lake Chalco, Worth's division being at the little village of Chalco on the easterly border of the lake. Worth immediately began reconnoissances in the neighborhood of his camp, with a view to ascertaining whether it was practicable for the army to move westward, south of Lake Chalco, so as to gain the highway leading south from the city of Mexico in the direction of Cuernavaca and Acapulco, thus turning the positions of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo. This route had been considered by Scott while the army remained at Puebla, and his engineers had carefully gathered such information as was available in regard to it; but the evidence seemed to be, on the whole, unfavorable, and Scott himself had not directed the making of any inquiries in that direction after the troops had arrived in the valley. Under Worth's orders, however, Colonel Duncan, of the artillery, with a strong escort, marched on the early morning of August 14 and found that the road, though rough, could readily be made passable for artillery and trains. It ran over the hills along the edge of the lake upon firm ground and appeared to Duncan's party, who went within ten miles of the Acapulco highway, to offer no real difficulties to the passage of the entire army.

On the morning of that same day (Saturday, August 14) Scott had summoned a meeting of general officers at his head-quarters at Ayotla, and laid before them a plan of attack upon the fortified village of Mexicalcingo, which, he said, he did not consider unalterable should Colonel Duncan's reconnoissance prove that the route south of Lake Chalco was practicable. His plan, briefly, involved masking the Peñon by a relatively small body and making a

[1] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 671; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 213-218.

frontal attack upon Mexicalcingo by the remainder of Twiggs's, Quitman's, and Pillow's divisions. Worth, meanwhile, with such artillery as he could get over the road, was to pass to the south of Lake Chalco and attack Mexicalcingo in the rear.[1]

The plan obviously involved the most serious risks; but if the road south of Chalco was not passable for the army with all its trains and artillery, it was the only solution of the problem which presented itself. Late in the afternoon, however, Duncan and his party returned from their reconnoissance, having had a skirmish with a party of guerillas in which Lieutenant Schuyler Hamilton had been severely wounded, and reported to Worth the entire feasibility of gaining the Acapulco road. Duncan was at once despatched, weary as he was, to Scott's head-quarters to report in person the results of his reconnoissance; and upon hearing his report Scott abandoned the plan of a frontal attack and determined upon pursuing the southern route.

"In ordinary circumstances," says Ripley, "and in ordinary warfare, the movement around Lake Chalco would have been dangerous in the extreme, for it abandoned all communication, and left a long and narrow, and in some places, as was afterward apparent, dangerous defile in rear of the American army. Everything was placed in the hazard of the battle by the movement, and retreat, in case of ill success, was out of the question. But the movement on Mexicalcingo was no less hazardous in such event, and, besides, there was the positive certainty of the greatest difficulty in the front; and as for the impracticability of the retreat, such had been the character of all or nearly all the operations of the war."[2]

On the evening of Sunday, August 15, therefore, the movement was begun, Worth leading and proceeding some distance on the road before dark. Pillow and Quitman followed on Monday morning, while Twiggs remained at Ayotla

[1] "The plan almost decided upon is to carry the town of Mexicalcingo on the border of the canal leading to the city. This as you will see will . . . secure comfortable shelter to our troops *in case of proposals to negotiate*; and should these not come, a comparatively bloodless capture of the city."—(Trist to Buchanan, August 14, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.*)

[2] Ripley, II, 203.

in order to threaten the Peñon and Mexicalcingo and to deceive the enemy as long as practicable."

The movement of the American army had, of course, been observed by Santa Anna, and as soon as it was well ascertained orders were given for the withdrawal of the greater part of the Mexican troops to the fortified positions of San Antonio and Churubusco. Ex-President Herrera was left in command of the Peñon, and the national guards returned from their picnic to the city, discontented and discouraged at the unheroic ending of an expedition which had been begun with such a display of noisy patriotism. They found the city deserted by most of the wealthier families. The sight of the empty and silent streets was not calculated to encourage the impressionable volunteers.

On Monday, August 16, Twiggs's division marched from Ayotla, and soon after starting met the cavalry of Alvarez advancing from Texcoco. Twiggs halted, deployed into line facing easterly, and opened with his artillery upon the Mexican lancers, whom a few shots sufficed to disperse; and the division then proceeded without molestation over the road which Duncan had explored, reaching the Acapulco highway and joining the rest of the army near the village of Tlalpam or, as it was otherwise called, San Agustin de las Cuevas—a village which had been in former days much resorted to by the people of Mexico during the celebration of the feast of the Ascension.[1] The village lay in the midst of a fertile and productive country, but on the west was "a great tract of black lava, sterile, bleak and entirely destitute of vegetation," known as the Pedregal—an ancient flow of lava from the neighboring mountain of Ajusco.

On the high-road and about a mile north of San Agustin lay what Madame Calderon called the "noble hacienda" of San Antonio—"a fine solid mass of building, and as you enter the court-yard, through a deep archway, the great outhouses, stables, and especially the granary, look like remains

[1] An interesting account of the prodigious gambling and cock-fighting that went on during the three days of the fair will be found in Madame Calderon's *Life in Mexico*, 163–165.

of feudalism, they are on so large and magnificent a scale." This hacienda, as the Americans soon discovered, had been strongly fortified by the Mexicans and completely commanded the approach to the city from San Agustin. About two miles north of San Antonio on the road to the city was a fortified convent and bridge at Churubusco, which was known to be strongly held, although with what force was quite uncertain. West of San Agustin, a mule track led across the Pedregal to another road running northerly through the village of San Angel toward the city of Mexico.

The first obstacle to be encountered by Scott's army in making an advance along the Acapulco road toward the city was, therefore, the hacienda of San Antonio, which could only be approached by artillery along a straight piece of road, the ground upon the east being too soft for artillery; and the ground upon the west, the Pedregal, being too rough even for the passage of animals. The problem of turning the works at San Antonio, therefore, resolved itself into the question whether artillery could be taken from San Agustin across the southern end of the Pedregal to the San Angel road, a distance of five miles or less. That question was soon answered by Scott's engineers, who reported that although the existing mule path was not practicable for wheeled vehicles, it could be made practicable without much difficulty.

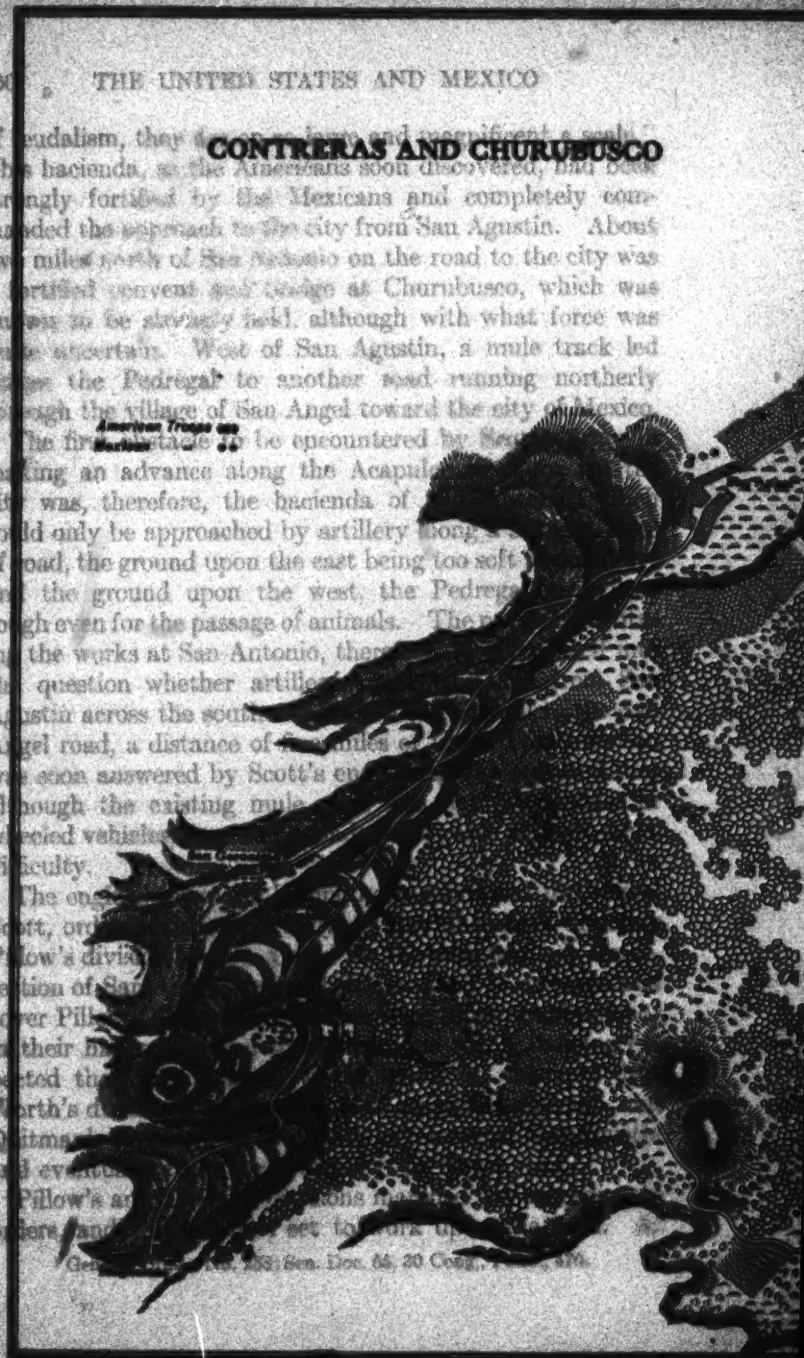
The engineers' reports having been submitted to General Scott, orders were issued early on the nineteenth directing Pillow's division to open a road for the siege trains in the direction of San Angel, Twiggs being ordered to advance and cover Pillow's division. The men were to carry subsistence in their haversacks and to bivouac one night, it being expected that their wagons would follow on the next day. Worth's division was to continue to mask San Antonio, and Quitman's division was to remain in reserve at San Agustin and eventually to follow Worth by the direct road.[1]

Pillow's and Twiggs's divisions marched out according to orders, and Pillow's men set to work upon the road. As

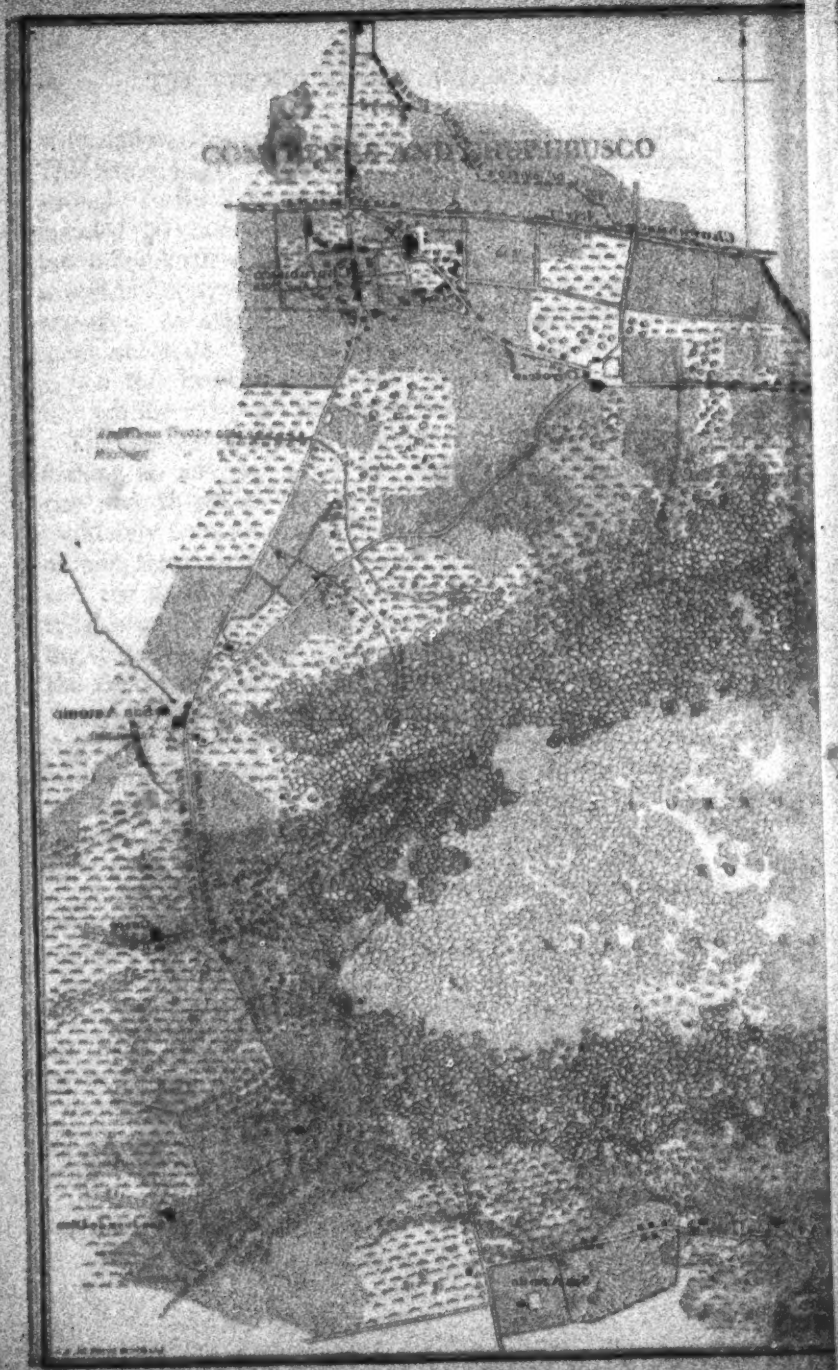
[1] General Orders No. 258; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 470.

CONTRERAS AND CHURUBUSCO

## CONTRERAS AND CHURUBUSCO



San Antonio
PEDREGOSA
YIELD OF LAVA



the troops advanced across the Pedregal, and just before they came upon the San Angel road, they discovered a large body of Mexican troops with numerous artillery posted on the other side of that road and commanding the western outlet of the path which they had been following.

The San Angel road at this point ran northwesterly, following the general course of a small mountain stream, the Magdalena Brook, which ultimately fell into what was called the Churubusco River. The banks of the stream were steep, and it ran through a deep and rugged ravine. On its westerly side a number of other small streams coming down from the mountains fell into it, forming a series of rounded promontories which seemed to afford good opportunities for defence. The westerly track, which Twiggs's division had followed from San Agustin to the edge of the Pedregal, descending into the valley of the main stream, passed close by the small ranch of Padierna and there joined the San Angel road. The hill opposite to the ranch of Padierna, on which the Mexican troops were stationed, was known to the Mexicans as the hill of Padierna, or by the native Indian name of Pelon Cuauhtitla.

The San Angel road ran from Padierna about a mile further south, where it ended at the village of Contreras. North of Padierna on the road was a ranch called Ansaldo; and about a quarter of a mile west of Ansaldo, among the foot-hills, was a little Indian village known as San Gerónimo, surrounded by orchards. On both sides of the Magdalena Brook the ground was open, and generally cultivated—the favorite crop being Indian corn, now nearly ripe and standing higher than a man's head.

The American commanders confused the names of the several ranches and villages. To the ranch of Padierna they sometimes gave the name of Contreras, while Ansaldo and San Gerónimo were not distinguished, the village being frequently called by the name of the ranch. The contest which ensued in this neighborhood was, therefore, called by the Americans the battle of Contreras, and by the Mexicans, more correctly, the battle of Padierna.

The Mexican troops whom Pillow and Twiggs thus encountered proved to be Valencia's Army of the North, with a force of cavalry under General Torrejon. Valencia, as has been seen, had been directed to occupy the village of Texcoco in order to observe Scott's movements, and at Texcoco Valencia remained until August 14, when the movement of Scott's whole army to the south of Lake Chalco began to be suspected. Valencia thereupon decided to march by way of Guadalupe and the city to watch the San Angel road.[1] His division reached the village of San Angel on August 16, and he immediately proceeded to reconnoitre in the direction of the village of Contreras with the view to ascertaining whether the American forces could make their way across the Pedregal to the San Angel road. He appears to have become satisfied that the only possible means of crossing the lava beds was by means of the path which was actually followed by Twiggs and Pillow on the nineteenth; but late on the seventeenth of August he wrote to Santa Anna that his officers had discovered that there were four paths in all, one of which was even practicable for artillery, and all of which terminated at San Angel. These officers, therefore, reported to Valencia that it would be impossible to protect the factory of Magdalena (Contreras), which was about five miles from San Angel, and at the same time to watch all four of the paths; and that if only the path leading to Padierna was guarded by his troops, he might end by being completely cut off in the mountains without succor or means of retreat. Valencia's officers further reported that the village of San Angel itself could not be held unless it were fortified, and that there was no time for doing this in view of the nearness of the enemy. They therefore recommended falling back nearer to the city of Mexico, unless reinforced that same night with two thousand infantry.[2]

Santa Anna at once replied that as yet only the advance of Scott's army had reached San Agustin, that it consisted

[1] This movement seems to have been undertaken without orders, and even in defiance of orders, as Santa Anna seems to have wished Valencia to follow Twiggs toward San Agustin.—(*Apuntes para la historia de la guerra entre Mexico y los Estados Unidos*, by Ramon Alcaraz and others, Mexico, 1848, vol. i., p. 148.)

[2] Valencia to Minister of War, August 17, 1847; *ibid.*, 151.

of but twenty-five hundred men with four field-pieces, and that it was, therefore, improbable that Scott would undertake to march to San Angel on the following day in the face of a superior Mexican force. It was believed that Scott, on the other hand, might endeavor to carry the works at San Antonio by a direct assault, and Santa Anna considered there was no necessity for abandoning San Angel before it was positively known whether the enemy determined to advance upon that point. Valencia was accordingly ordered to remain at San Angel unless, contrary to all probability, Scott should advance on the following morning, and "in that case, and only in that case, your Excellency will march to Tacubaya, being careful to learn positively before undertaking the march whether the enemy has actually started."[1] But by the next morning, Wednesday, the eighteenth of August, Valencia had come to the conclusion that so far from falling back from San Angel toward the city, as he had been advised to do, it would be better for him to advance south and occupy the hill of Padierna with his entire force; and during that day he threw up intrenchments and placed his guns in position to command the approaches over the Pedregal.

While Valencia was thus busy intrenching himself the Americans were pushing their reconnoissances in the direction of his camp, and at eleven o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, August 18, a force which he estimated at twelve hundred strong, with two guns, appeared in his neighborhood. A few shots were fired and the American force fell back toward San Agustin, much to the gratification of the Mexican commander.[2]

Valencia now fully expected to be attacked in force, but Santa Anna seems to have become convinced that the real attack would be made upon the hacienda of San Antonio. At any rate, orders were sent to Valencia that evening advising him of the American movements in front of the hacienda.

[1] Alcorta to Valencia, August 17, 1847; *Ibid.*, 151.
[2] Valencia to Minister of War, August 18, 1847; *Ibid.*, 153.

"His Excellency the President therefore directs," the orders ran, "that at dawn to-morrow morning your Excellency will march with the whole force of the army under your command and take up a position in the village of Coyoacan where you will remain, sending forward your artillery to the fort of Churubusco and the works at the bridge of that name."[1]

Valencia, however, had no idea of obeying this very brief and simple order and determined to remain where he was. His motive seems never to have been in any particular doubt. He was no friend of Santa Anna's, and indeed he was not identified with any one of the principal factions. He was a man who was perpetually intriguing for his own benefit. He had opposed Bustamante and supported Santa Anna in 1841; he had opposed Santa Anna and helped to drive him out of the country in 1844; and he was now openly ambitious to put himself into Santa Anna's seat as President of the republic. He was probably not a very accomplished soldier, but he saw clearly that Scott was far more likely to attempt to turn the position at San Antonio by way of the San Angel road than he was to attack the hacienda and its strong outlying works. Valencia, therefore, at 5 P. M. wrote to the Secretary of War acknowledging receipt of the order to march to Coyoacan and to send his artillery forward to the bridge of Churubusco, and politely expressing his regret at being unable to comply with the orders given him.

"I should like," he wrote, "to reply to this order as I have done to others; but unfortunately it is impossible for me, both because of my military and patriotic conscience, and in my view of events, to see things in the same light. I believe that the cause of the nation depends on not abandoning these positions, and the road which leads from San Augustin to Padierna at this point. It is as clear to me as the light of day that the enemy will attack, if not to-morrow, on the next day; and that he will do it simultaneously upon two obvious points, namely, San Antonio and Churubusco on the one hand, and the point which is held by the army under my command on the other; that one attack will be a feint, while the other will be made with all

[1] Minister of War to Valencia, August 18, 1847; *ibid.*, 152.

possible vigor; but that if he finds one of them abandoned when he begins to move, he will suspend his movement upon the other until his forces have an opportunity by making a rapid march to place themselves in a position to attack the remaining point in flank and turn the position. This is what I believe will happen if this road be abandoned; and the Mexican army will find itself attacked in flank and in front, while, at the same time, if the enemy does not choose to operate in this manner, he is free to approach the City with impunity, —those of his forces who may have come by this village (San Angel) being in a position to march directly from here upon Mexico either by the straight road to Niño Perdido, or else by that of Miscoac to the gate of Piedad, or else to Tacubaya." [1]

At the same time he wrote to Santa Anna a private letter explaining that as a Mexican and as a general in command he could not conscientiously obey the orders to retreat and abandon the position of Padierna, where he had every probability of victory, especially as he was perfectly convinced that the abandonment of his intrenched camp "would be our destruction." And to Tornel, who was Santa Anna's chief adviser, he wrote that he considered it would be not only a great mistake to obey the order but a betrayal of his most sacred duties; and he therefore begged Tornel to use his influence with Santa Anna, inasmuch as the enemy might be beaten beyond a doubt if the whole army were concentrated at Padierna.[2] To these communications Santa Anna replied from Churubusco that same night, explaining that the order to fall back had been based upon the reasons given by Valencia himself in his note of the day before, in which he had reported that there were four paths leading from San Agustin to San Angel, and that if he held the position at Padierna he might be completely cut off without supplies and without means of retreat. This and other statements in the letter referred to had seemed to be conclusive and were the reasons for directing a retreat to Coyoacan; but at the same time the President could not be indifferent to the reasons given for holding the post, and Valencia might remain in the position which he occupied, assuming

[1] Valencia to Minister of War, Aug. 18, 1847; *ibid.*, 152.
[2] Valencia to Santa Anna; same to Tornel, Aug. 18, 1847; *ibid.*, 159.

that his reconnoissances had enabled him to find a suitable intrenched camp which he could defend.[1]

Santa Anna also sent a personal note to Valencia to the effect that the enemy's movements had fully confirmed the expectations upon which he had based his order of the day before.

> "Nevertheless," he added, "since the problem is presented, I do not wish that its solution should be based on any supposed lack of patriotism on my part, in regard to which I yield to no man; and I prefer to take my chances of all that may happen, rather than to give an opportunity to any one to say that things did not turn out as well as they might because I insisted that they should be done correctly and according to rule. Do what you like and let each one bear the responsibility that pertains to him." [2]

In judging of Santa Anna's responsibility for what followed, it must be borne in mind that he had the most profound and well-justified distrust of his own army. He had made up his mind weeks before that he would not venture upon any offensive movements, and that the only chance of success lay partly in intrigues to gain time and partly in awaiting attack behind intrenchments. Up to this time he had been disappointed in Scott's failure to deliver frontal attacks upon the strong positions at the Peñon and at San Antonio. But Scott's reconnoissances in force during the day upon which the foregoing letter was written had undoubtedly revived Mexican hopes that Scott might yet attack the lines of San Antonio, and for this reason Santa Anna was at that moment all the more willing to refrain from attempting to exercise authority over Valencia. It is, indeed, difficult to say what he could have done that evening. Valencia was at a distance with an independent command, and he flatly refused to obey orders; and Santa Anna, indulging in the hope and expectation that the main attack would be directed upon San Antonio and not upon Valencia, took the path of least resistance by leaving the

[1] Minister of War to Valencia, Aug. 18, 1847; *ibid.*, 153.
[2] Santa Anna to Valencia, Aug. 18, 1847; *ibid.*, 100.

latter to his own devices while discharging the whole responsibility upon him for any disaster.

On the morning of Thursday, the nineteenth, therefore, Valencia moved his entire force from San Angel to the hill of Padierna—previously held only by a relatively small detachment, which had been engaged in throwing up intrenchments—and during the morning his troops were in position to await the expected American advance.

The hill upon which his camp was situated was a rounded elevation chiefly covered with fields of corn. The easterly slope toward the Pedregal was abrupt, and the view was to some extent obstructed by trees and bushes. On his left and left rear was a deep ravine formed by one of the streams that emptied into the Magdalena Brook. Along the easterly slopes (not the summit) of the hill his artillery was placed in the arc of a circle, supported by the greater part of his infantry, while at the same time the westerly side of the Magdalena Brook near the bottom of the hill was held by small detachments of cavalry and infantry of the line, and the rocky slope descending from the Pedregal into the valley directly in front of the hill was covered with skirmishers.[1] A small advanced party was placed in observation on the hill of Zacatepec, an eminence in the Pedregal which commanded a view as far as San Agustin, and from which any advance of the American troops could readily be seen.

On the left of Valencia's main line were the local troops of San Luis Potosí, and on the right was Cabrera's brigade, made up of auxiliaries and "active militia" from Celaya, Guanajuato, and Querétaro. Head-quarters were established in the rear of the batteries near the centre, and a second line was formed by four battalions, including the *guarda costa* of Tampico, troops who had seen service in all the battles against Taylor. The reserves, who were at first stationed at the ranch of Ansaldo under the orders of General Salas, the late President substitute, was composed of

[1] Balbontin says the ranch itself, on the east of the brook, was not occupied. —(*Invasion Americana*, 112.)

the corps of engineers, three battalions of infantry, and three regiments of cavalry; but they were soon withdrawn to join the main body. The extreme right was supported by two regular battalions. In this position Valencia waited until afternoon, when he received a message from the hill of Zacatepec that the Americans were advancing toward that point.

When Twiggs had crossed the Pedregal, Smith's brigade, which was leading, drove back Valencia's advanced parties and emerged in full view of his camp. The rifle regiment were sent forward as skirmishers to clear the ground. Descending into the ravine, they came in contact with some Mexican troops who were sheltered behind a maguey hedge within about three hundred yards of Valencia's intrenchments. The riflemen seem to have fallen back at this time to the Padierna ranch, so that the skirmishers on each side held, speaking generally, the two opposite banks of the brook at the bottom of the ravine. From this time forward, during the remainder of the afternoon, the Americans kept up an active fire, simulating, as far as possible, a real attack.

As soon as the Mexican pickets had been thus driven back, Magruder's battery of field artillery and the mountain howitzer and rocket battery were placed in position opposite Valencia's camp and about nine hundred yards distant from it at the top of the easterly slope of the ravine.

"As soon as our batteries were established," as Twiggs reported, "the enemy opened a most destructive fire from several of his large guns. The cannonading was kept up on both sides for several hours, until, compelled by the loss of officers, men, and crippled pieces, our batteries were placed for the time under shelter."

The cannonading on the American side was indeed entirely futile, for the guns were too light to do any serious damage to the Mexican forces at the range at which they were compelled to fire; while the Mexican guns, of much heavier calibre, soon began to get the range of the American batteries and, as one of Magruder's men wrote, "nothing but

their excessively bad firing had saved our battery from being totally annihilated." At sunset the American skirmishers seem to have fallen back from the ravine toward a more secure position in the Pedregal, and the batteries also were still further withdrawn, though they were unable to proceed far in the darkness owing to the difficulties of the ground. The attack in front, therefore, accomplished nothing, although the noise and fury of the cannonading, and the skirmishing in the ravine, doubtless served to divert Valencia's attention from the more important movements which the American commanders were making in an effort to turn one or the other flank of the Mexican line.

A direct attack upon Valencia's front, in the face of his numerous artillery and over the difficult ground, had soon been seen to be impracticable, and it was not seriously undertaken. Nor did the ground upon the American left appear to offer any prospect of success; and therefore, after such examination as was practicable, Riley's brigade of regular troops were sent far toward the American right in an attempt to gain the road leading from Padierna toward the city of Mexico, and thus to interpose, if possible, between Valencia and the city. The route which Riley was compelled to take was, as Twiggs reported,

"most difficult and tedious, passing over volcanic rocks and across large fissures barely narrow enough to permit the men to get over by leaping. Accompanied by Lieutenant Tower of the engineers, this brigade finally reached the main road, and got in a position in rear of the enemy's position."

Cadwalader's brigade of Pillow's division was next sent to join Riley as soon as it became evident that it was practicable for infantry to cross the Pedregal in the direction which Riley had been following. Riley, however, without waiting for Cadwalader, pushed forward across the road, past the hacienda of Ansaldo, toward the village of San Gerónimo. Before he reached that village he was confronted by a body of cavalry and two battalions of infantry with one field-piece, which had been sent from Valencia's

camp. But by this time Riley's troops had gained the shelter of the orchards near San Gerónimo, and a charge of the Mexican cavalry, in which General Frontera was killed at the head of his men, was quickly repulsed. The Mexicans, indeed, appear to have had little enthusiasm in their charge, and when their leader fell the whole body retired, and Riley's brigade continued through and beyond the village.

Meanwhile, Cadwalader had struggled across the Pedregal, descended into the ravine, and reached the San Angel road, when he became aware of a large body of Mexican troops advancing from the direction of the city of Mexico. Cadwalader was therefore between two bodies of the enemy, but he faced toward his new assailants and the latter did not attack. Instead, they moved off west of the road to occupy a hill lying between the villages of San Angel and San Gerónimo.

Pillow, perceiving the arrival of these Mexican reinforcements at about the same time that Cadwalader saw them, directed Morgan's regiment of Pierce's brigade to join Cadwalader; and at the same time General Smith, with his brigade of Twiggs's division, followed Morgan without specific orders. The remaining regiments of Pierce's brigade were thereupon moved forward to the support of the batteries and down the slopes of the ravine, occupying the place which Smith's brigade had thus far held. This position they continued to hold during the night, except that a body of Mexicans took and kept possession of the ranch buildings of Padierna.

While these several movements were going on, and somewhere about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, Scott himself arrived from San Agustin. By that time Riley and Cadwalader were in possession of the ranch of Ansaldo and the village of San Gerónimo, Riley having fallen back to the shelter of the village to join Cadwalader when he found a large force of cavalry under General Torrejon in his front. Scott saw at once that if San Gerónimo were strongly occupied by a force of infantry, such a force could arrest the re-

inforcements which Santa Anna was apparently sending from the city of Mexico, and thus ultimately decide the battle—which had now developed into a much more serious affair than he had at first intended. He therefore approved the dispositions made by Pillow; and when General Shields, with his volunteer brigade of Quitman's division (New York and South Carolina), came up from San Agustin somewhat later, Scott ordered Shields to follow and join the advanced forces at San Gerónimo.

The Mexican reinforcements from the direction of the city were, in fact, under the command of Santa Anna in person. He had received news at about two o'clock in the afternoon that the Americans were attacking Valencia's position, and he at once sent forward the brigade of General Francisco Pérez, then stationed at Coyoacan. He himself followed with his regiment of hussars and the light cavalry of Vera Cruz, together with a field-battery of five pieces. It was, as he reported, five o'clock in the afternoon when this whole force arrived near San Gerónimo, though the American reports would indicate that he was really upon the ground an hour or two earlier. He found it impossible to effect a junction with Valencia.

"There was," he wrote, "only one practicable road from San Angel to Padierna, very narrow, and commanded right and left by the positions which some of the enemy's battalions had seized. I endeavored to march by the flank, and I assured myself by examinations of the ground and by my own observation that the operation was not easy during what remained of that evening, since an advance on the right was impeded by a deep ravine which extended more than a league toward some hills on the southwest of San Angel; and there were enclosures and broken ground on the left; and as night came on while these reconnaissances were being made, there was nothing to do but to encamp and wait for daylight. A terrible tempest followed, accompanied by copious rain, which compelled me to order the infantry to take shelter in the neighboring village of San Angel, with orders to return at daybreak to their proper camp; in which I left the cavalry and artillery, who passed a cruel night because it continued to rain incessantly until morning."[1]

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 98.

The American troops meanwhile, all but Shields's brigade, had assembled in the village of San Gerónimo and between that and Ansaldo, facing Santa Anna, and General Smith, who took command of the whole body as the senior brigadier present, entertained an idea of attempting an immediate attack upon Santa Anna's troops, but the swift tropical night was falling and it was wisely determined not to begin the movement. Shields crossed the high-road after dark, halted to rest his men, and joined Smith's command at about ten o'clock at night—or possibly near midnight.

While the American infantry was thus pushing in between Valencia and Santa Anna, Scott, Twiggs, and Pillow had remained at the hill of Zacatepec, for it was quite impossible for any horse to follow the route pursued by the American infantry, and Twiggs was lame and unable to accompany his division on foot. At sunset Scott returned to head-quarters at San Agustin, where he was joined later by Twiggs and Pillow, who, in trying to find Pierce's brigade, had lost their way, and had almost ridden into Valencia's camp.

At eleven o'clock that night Captain Robert E. Lee came in from San Gerónimo, having managed to make his way through the darkness and falling rain in spite of innumerable dangers and difficulties.[1] Lee reported that the commanding officers at San Gerónimo had determined to make an attack upon the rear of Valencia's position immediately before daylight on the following morning, and that in order to support this movement they wished "a powerful diversion" to be made on the front of Valencia's position. The plan was cordially approved by Scott, who directed that one brigade of Worth's division, and the remaining brigade of Quitman's division, should start at the earliest practicable moment—which would not be until daylight—to join Pierce's brigade. Twiggs and Lee then set out and rejoined Pierce that night; but Pillow, worn out with the fatigues of the day, was urged by Scott to remain at head-quarters until morning—which he did.

[1] "The greatest feat of physical and moral courage performed by any individual, in my knowledge, pending the campaign."—(Testimony of General Scott in Pillow's court of inquiry; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 73.)

Meanwhile the American force at San Gerónimo passed some bitterly uncomfortable hours. The night was excessively cold and unusually rainy, and the men—exposed to the weather, without tents, and with little food—suffered severely. Fortunately for them, the Mexican troops were suffering quite as much from the elements and exhibited no desire to renew the conflict of the afternoon. Santa Anna remained at San Angel, waiting for daylight, while Valencia in his camp was celebrating what he regarded as the triumphs of the Mexican army. In a despatch dated at eight o'clock that night from "the triumphant camp of Padierna" he reported that after a desperate combat with the whole American army he had put their forces to shameful flight; and that, the honor of the republic having been preserved by the efforts of those under his command, he felt no hesitation in promoting the officers who had had a share "in this heroic day." By a general order to his troops, he thanked them for their distinguished services in repelling the invaders of the republic, and in the name of the nation promoted a number of officers by name.[1] At 9 P. M. he sent a second despatch to the Minister of War, condemning the failure of Santa Anna's troops, "commanded by the criminal General Don Francisco Pérez," who had not only failed to assist him, but had not even sent him a single message to inform him where the enemy was so that he could complete his triumph "and destroy the miserable remains of the Anglo-Americans who are shut up in Anzaldo to the number of two thousand men."[2]

This last despatch was sent as a reply to a verbal order from Santa Anna—transmitted by an aid who had managed to get from San Angel to the hill of Padierna by a circuitous mountain route—to the effect that Valencia should spike his guns and retire as soon as possible that same night to join the main army. Valencia was further informed that Santa Anna had with him six thousand men, with five guns, but was unable to attack the enemy in consequence of the

[1] Valencia to Minister of War, Aug. 19, 1847; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 154–160.
[2] Same to same, Aug. 19, 1847; *ibid.*, 155.

ravines which were in his front. But Valencia, without allowing Santa Anna's aid to finish delivering his message, interjected to say that he had fought the enemy for five hours, that he was now holding him with one battalion of infantry and Torrejon's cavalry, and that he (Valencia) would not retreat. This message, with Valencia's note, was delivered to Santa Anna before morning by the aid who had left Valencia's camp at ten o'clock at night.[1]

At three o'clock in the morning of the next day (Friday, August 20) the American troops from San Gerónimo were punctually ready to start for the attack upon Valencia's rear. The route which they designed to follow was the ravine coming in from the southwest and falling into the main stream just south of the place where the Americans had crossed the latter on the afternoon before. The men were drenched to the skin, cold, and hungry; but these physical discomforts probably served only to sharpen their anxiety for action. The line of the advance had been reconnoitred by Riley on the afternoon before, and was re-examined by engineers and other staff officers during the night; but the ground was so difficult and the night so dark that it was not until nearly daylight that the last of the American troops were out of the village. Riley's brigade led, followed by Cadwalader and then Smith, while Shields was left behind at Ansaldo.

By sunrise the leading American troops had reached a point directly in the rear of Valencia's position and, having drawn their wet loads and renewed the priming of their muskets, made ready to attack. They were still sheltered by the westerly slope of the hill from Valencia's observation, but as they rose to the crest of the hill they found that their movement had just been discovered. With loud shouts the American troops at once dashed from three directions into the left flank and rear of the Mexican intrenchments, where they were received by the hasty fire of two guns which had been turned in their direction, and by a scattering fire of ill-aimed musketry. The Mexicans were naturally in the greatest disorder, for Valencia fled at the very beginning of

[1] Memorandum of J. M. Ramiro; *ibid.*, 155.

the combat and the command devolved upon ex-President Salas, as second in command. Salas ordered the cavalry to charge, but Torrejon, "far from obeying my order, took to cowardly flight, and the cavalry following his example trampled down the infantry and ended by scattering them, thus consummating our defeat." The flying Mexicans gained the San Angel road, and, as they passed near Ansaldo, Shields's brigade opened upon them, while Pierce, who had advanced toward the ranch of Padierna, crossed the stream and joined in the pursuit. The battle itself lasted just seventeen minutes, but the road toward the capital was strewed for miles with the Mexican dead and wounded.

"Thus," as Scott reported, "was the great victory at Contreras achieved; one road to the capital opened; 700 of the enemy killed; 813 prisoners, including, among 88 officers, 4 generals; besides many colors and standards; 22 pieces of brass ordnance—half of large calibre; thousands of small arms and accoutrements; an immense quantity of shot, shells, powder and cartridges; 700 pack mules, many horses, etc., &c.—all in our hands."

Two of the guns taken from Valencia were the brass six-pounders which had been captured from Taylor at the battle of Buena Vista. They were retaken by a company of the fourth artillery—the same regiment which had lost the guns, "though without the loss of honor"—and the achievement was greeted by what a Mexican officer described as "*hurras atronaderas.*" [1]

[1] Scott's report of Contreras is in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 303–308. Annexed thereto are the reports of his subordinates, which are combined with the reports of the subsequent battle of Churubusco. A great mass of additional information as to the events of that day will be found in the testimony taken by the court of inquiry in the case of General Pillow, who had been charged by Scott with writing untruthful accounts of this battle, in which Scott's own share in it was improperly minimized. The evidence will be found in Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess. The findings and opinion of the court exonerating Pillow are at pages 328, 329. The reports of Santa Anna and Anaya are printed in the appendix to the *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, and have been already referred to. For the statements of other eye-witnesses of the battle see *Autobiography of an English Soldier*, 253; Hitchcock, 276–279; Baltimore on Pillow's staff), 211–246; Wilcox, 358–377; and *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 231–242.

## CHAPTER XLV

### CHURUBUSCO

Scott, as we have seen, gave orders during the night of Thursday, the nineteenth of August—while the American troops in the village of San Gerónimo were making their preparations for next morning's attack on Valencia's camp—for Worth to leave one of his brigades in front of San Antonio, and to march with the rest of his division and Quitman's remaining brigade to reinforce the troops in the Pedregal. The orders were duly obeyed, and the two brigades started for their destination early on Friday morning; but before they had gone far they received news of the successful assault upon the Mexican camp, together with orders from General Scott directing them to turn back. Worth was then ordered to attack the lines of San Antonio in front with his whole division, as soon as Pillow's and Twiggs's divisions, moving through San Angel, should approach the rear of that position, while Quitman's one small brigade was left in charge of the hospitals and trains at San Agustin. Scott himself had ridden out toward the front early in the morning, but arrived after Valencia's defeat was accomplished, and while pursuers and pursued were streaming down the San Angel road. He at once gave directions for an advance through San Angel, in the direction of the rear of the Mexican works at San Antonio.

The road, after passing through San Angel, and about a quarter of a mile beyond it, forked, the left-hand road leading to Tacubaya and Chapultepec through well-cultivated fields of corn and maguey, while the right-hand branch, curving to the west, crossed the Magdalena Brook and about three-quarters of a mile farther on came to the famous old

village of Coyoacan, the first seat of the Spanish government in New Spain and the favorite residence of Cortés.

From Coyoacan, one road led nearly due north to the city of Mexico. Another road led northeasterly, direct to the bridge of Churubusco and past the neighboring convent, where Santa Anna two days before had been quartered. And a third road led southeasterly to the hacienda of San Antonio, joining the Acapulco highway just in the rear of the Mexican works. Scott, on reaching Coyoacan, had therefore his choice, first, of marching upon the city of Mexico or upon Tacubaya and Chapultepec, leaving San Antonio and Churubusco behind him and to the east; or, second, of proceeding northeasterly so as to cut off the retreat of the troops at San Antonio if they were defeated by Worth's attack in front; or, third, of marching with his whole force on the rear of San Antonio. Advancing cautiously toward Coyoacan, Scott's force drove out or captured the Mexican troops left there in observation, and halted to arrange for future movements. Captain Lee, of the engineers, was sent with Philip Kearny's troop of dragoons and the rifle regiment to reconnoitre the rear of San Antonio, while Lieutenant Stevens was directed to observe the field from the steeple of the village church of Coyoacan. Within ten minutes the latter officer reported that the enemy were abandoning San Antonio, and that the road for a mile was occupied by his troops and baggage in retreat.

Worth, as it turned out, had not literally followed the orders given him to wait in front of San Antonio until he heard the sound of an attack upon its rear, but had moved his troops so as to be ready to assault it both in front and rear. The ground had been most carefully reconnoitred on the three previous days, and at eleven o'clock in the morning Worth began his movement by sending Clarke's brigade to his left, across a portion of the Pedregal, so as to turn the fortified Mexican position. The other brigade (Garland's), with a battery of light artillery, was advanced as near as practicable to the intrenchments with instructions to storm them if opportunity offered.

But before these dispositions had fairly been made the Mexicans had begun to evacuate the works, which, of course, had become untenable since Scott's main force had gained their rear at Coyoacan. Clarke, therefore, moving across the rocks on the left of the road, found nothing but a few skirmishers in his front whom he easily drove away, and as he approached the high-road about a thousand yards north of San Antonio he discovered the garrison of the hacienda in full retreat. Falling at once upon the Mexican column, he cut it nearly in two, whereupon the rear portion, under the command of ex-President Bravo—a force, as Worth estimated, of about two thousand men with four guns—took a cross-road leading due east from the highway toward the Peñon and disappeared from the scene of action, while the other half of the force rapidly retreated along the road in the direction of Churubusco. By the time Clarke had thus cut the Mexican column in two Garland's brigade had taken San Antonio without resistance, and following along the road joined Clarke's brigade, and the whole reunited division moved rapidly in the direction of the city of Mexico, disregarding entirely the Mexican force which had fled to the east.

As they approached the bridge of Churubusco on the heels of the retreating Mexicans they found that a regularly constructed *tête de pont* had been thrown up in front of it, which appeared to be held by a large force. On the other side of the Churubusco River, in rear of the works, there was "a dense line of infantry as far as the eye could reach." West of the road a convent was seen, "strongly occupied with troops and protected by batteries and field defences," and it was obvious at once that the carrying of this position by a direct attack would prove a very serious task for the American army. Meanwhile, the Mexicans who had retreated from San Antonio were pouring through the *tête de pont* and across the bridge in great confusion. One gun and several ammunition wagons were abandoned on the road, blocking the advance of the American troops, but at the same time affording them some cover from the heavy fire which

was opened from the Mexican works as soon as the head of Worth's column came within range.

Scott had not yet secured any information in regard to what works existed at and near Churubusco, nor had he any detailed knowledge of the roads leading to the city and Tacubaya; but he did know that the most direct and the best road to the city from his depot at San Agustin was the highway which passed through San Antonio and Churubusco. His first thought, therefore, had simply been to remove the obstacle which was presented by the hacienda of San Antonio and its surrounding works, and the moment he learned of the abandonment of that position he sent Pillow, with one of his brigades (Cadwalader's), to operate with Worth along the line of the highway. At the same time Twiggs, with Smith's brigade and a field-battery, was sent to seize the road near the convent of San Mateo at Churubusco.[1] Pierce's brigade was soon after ordered to take a road leading north from Coyoacan—not with a view to attacking the city, but in order to come in on the Acapulco road still further north and in the rear of the convent; and shortly afterward Riley's brigade of Twiggs's division was sent to follow Smith's brigade in the direction of the convent, while Shields's brigade of Quitman's division was ordered to follow Pierce.

It will thus be seen that Scott's whole plan was based upon the idea of clearing the Acapulco road. He had proposed to carry the intrenchments at San Antonio by a concerted attack, and then to seize the road at three different points in the rear of San Antonio by Pillow, Twiggs, and Shields, respectively. He had never counted upon a strong defence at the Churubusco bridge, and his whole thought was to defeat and still further scatter the Mexican army, thus dispersing the last organized military force of his enemy. But his plans had to be rapidly changed by the unexpected obstacles which were now discovered.

The Churubusco River, formed by a succession of mountain streams—of which the Magdalena Brook is one—runs at

[1] Erroneously called, in the American reports, the convent of San Pablo.

this point almost precisely east; and although it had doubtless, in past times, meandered through the marshy ground south of the city of Mexico, it had, long before the time of the battle to which it gave its name, been made into a drainage ditch, perfectly straight, and with high banks on each side to prevent its overflowing the flat fields north and south of it. At the point where the Acapulco road crossed the river the strong *tête de pont* just spoken of had been thrown up a few days before by Santa Anna's engineers. It was an earthwork of strong profile with a wet ditch in its front, which was filled by the waters of the river, now (near the middle of the rainy season) at its height.[1] It mounted five guns manned by the companies of St. Patrick (American deserters) and by the battalion of Tlalpa.

About a quarter of a mile southwesterly from the bridge, upon the road leading to Coyoacan, stands the convent of San Mateo, a venerable building dating from the year 1678, which still remains one of the most interesting and attractive objects in the immediate neighborhood of the city of Mexico. The little convent church, now rarely used, is of solid and sombre Spanish masonry, but is finished on its western front with blue tiles or *azulejos*, which add a delightful touch to the quaintness and incomparable charm of the group of buildings. On the south side of the church is a beautiful patio with a gallery on the second story, and orange-trees blossoming in the midst of it add beauty and perfume to the secluded spot. The convent is surrounded with large gardens which must once have been cultivated by the Franciscan brothers, and about which stood, and still stands, a strong masonry wall some twelve feet in height, the whole constituting a very formidable place of defence.

Under Santa Anna's directions the walls had been scaffolded on the inside, giving protection for infantry, while upon the south and southwest strong intrenchments had been constructed outside the convent walls, which mounted

[1] In winter the bed of the river is absolutely dry. Even in August it was perfectly fordable.

six pieces of artillery and had an adequate infantry support, principally the two battalions of the national guards of the city of Mexico known as Independencia and Bravo, who had been brought here from El Peñon two days before.[1]

When the American troops from Coyoacan came up the Mexican position was thus assailed almost simultaneously by Worth on the southeast and by Twiggs on the southwest; but the movements of these two commanders were made without concert and without any adequate reconnoissance. Nor were the two brigades under Shields and Pierce, which had crossed the Churubusco River west of the convent, in touch with the forces of either Worth or Twiggs, so that the battle which followed consisted in reality of three separate and distinct combats, which must be separately described.

Worth, as has already been stated, advanced along the Acapulco highway. A little before noon, just before his division reached the scattered houses forming the village of Churubusco, he was joined by Pillow with Cadwalader's brigade, who had turned off in his march toward the direction of San Antonio as soon as he discovered that the works at the latter point had fallen, that the head of Worth's division was opening fire on the *tête de pont*, and that Twiggs was beginning his attack upon the convent. Worth at once sent Garland's brigade to the east of the road, where it was formed in line facing northwesterly toward the *tête de pont*. Clarke's brigade still held the road itself, while Cadwalader's brigade, under Pillow, was sent to the west to interpose between the convent and the bridge; but the cross-fire from these two points was so severe that Cadwalader was able to effect little. Nor was a direct attack down the road upon the principal front of the *tête de pont* successful, for Clarke's troops were soon driven back by the heavy fire from the Mexican works, and they also were directed to turn off into the marshy fields already occupied by Garland's brigade. Worth's division now formed a quarter of a circle east of the

[1] The other two battalions, Victoria and Hidalgo, had been stationed at San Antonio, and, as they retreated to the city, did not fire a shot that day.

road, with its right flank reaching nearly to the Churubusco River and its left to the highway, and in that formation it advanced slowly through the tall corn—which had not been cut down except close to the works—suffering heavy loss, but keeping up a steady fire on the Mexican intrenchments as well as upon the infantry lining the north bank of the river.

Twiggs, in his advance from Coyoacan upon Churubusco, came into action just as the Mexican infantry in the convent and *tête de pont* first opened fire upon the head of Worth's division, and he ordered forward a battery of light artillery to a point from which his engineers assured him the guns could fire upon the convent. Their statement was that only a single piece of Mexican artillery was in position; but this supposed one-gun battery soon proved to be simply the western salient of the work in front of the convent, which was armed with six guns. Twiggs's whole division was now rapidly brought up, and formed in the fields a rough semi-circle to the south and west of the convent, where, in spite of the tall corn through which they advanced, they were exposed to a most severe fire from the intrenchments in their front and from the roofs of the convent buildings. For upward of two hours the contest at this point continued, the Americans very slowly gaining ground, until at length the slackening of the Mexican fire indicated the exhausting of their ammunition.

Shields and Pierce, in the meantime, had become heavily engaged with the Mexican reserves stationed along the Acapulco road north of the Churubusco River. The Mexican infantry along the road was partly sheltered by maguey hedges and stood on the defensive, while a body of their cavalry was sent across the fields to interpose between the American force and the convent. The American advance was much delayed by the muddy nature of the soil and by the numerous ditches with which the fields were cut up, but the men found some protection in the scattered farm buildings of the hacienda of Portales. They were all volunteers or raw recruits, and being attacked in front and flank,

and suffering heavy loss, were at times thrown into considerable disorder and could do little more than hold their ground.

Thus the battle raged on the east, south, and north of the Mexican position; but as Worth's troops slowly closed in upon the *tête de pont* and Twiggs's division on the convent, the Mexican fire began visibly to slacken. Presently the Mexican troops lining the northerly bank of the Churubusco River were observed to give way and retreat through the fields in their rear toward the city. A party of American troops of different regiments from Worth's right, quickly waded the river east of the *tête de pont* and formed in position in rear of that work, while at the same time the remainder of his men, who had been slowly working through the corn, came out on the small open space immediately in front of the intrenchments. By this time Pillow's men, who had been unable to penetrate between the *tête de pont* and the convent, crossed the road and joined Worth's division, and the entire force, dashing through the wet ditches waist-deep, poured over the parapets and into the intrenchments, which they cleared with the bayonet in a very few instants.

"The garrison of the tête du pont," says Ripley, who, as a member of Pillow's staff, was on the spot, "made but short resistance. A few shots were delivered, a few bayonets crossed, and the greater number fled over the bridge toward the city, leaving three guns, two standards, and twenty-seven officers and privates in the hands of the conquerors, whose loud and continued shouts succeeded the roar of hostile musketry and cannon which but a moment before had been delivered from the parapet." [1]

The first effect of the fall of the *tête de pont* was to relieve the pressure upon the American troops north of the river. The flight of the garrison threw the Mexican reserve into disorder, and the entire body, in one intermingled mass, poured along the road toward the city, pursued by the whole of Pillow's and Worth's infantry, which had crossed the bridge and joined the party that had previously waded the river. Shields and Pierce at once advanced to the highway and,

[1] Ripley, II, 273.

with Harney's dragoons, joined Worth and Pillow in the pursuit of the defeated Mexicans.

Meanwhile, for some short period of time, the convent still held out. Twiggs had carried the intrenchments in its front at about the same time that Worth carried the *tête de pont*, and the defenders fell back into the convent itself. But one of the captured guns of the *tête de pont* was placed in position and opened fire upon the convent, Duncan's battery of Worth's division opened on it from the main road, and one of Pillow's regiments was ordered to move to a position on the north of the convent and attack it upon that side; but before this regiment could get into action a white flag was hung out on the church tower. Smith's brigade of Twiggs's division received the surrender of the garrison, who numbered after the surrender 104 officers and 1,155 men. There were also captured at this point seven pieces of artillery, much ammunition, and a large quantity of small-arms. Among the officers who surrendered were General Manuel Rincon, who commanded the post, and who had defended Vera Cruz at the time of the French attack; ex-President Anaya; and Don Manuel Eduardo Gorostiza, who had been Mexican minister to the United States twelve years before and had given so much offence to President Jackson. Gorostiza was now colonel of the Bravo battalion of the national guards of Mexico.

Scott, whose head-quarters had remained at Coyoacan during the battle, now sent orders to give up pursuit, and accordingly the infantry were halted a mile or two north of the Churubusco bridge, though the cavalry, with Worth's permission, pursued the retreating enemy up to the very gates of the city, where a small body of dragoons dashed into the crowded mass of fugitives. As the American cavalry galloped up, the artillery near the gate of San Antonio Abad opened on the party, inflicting severe loss. Captain Philip Kearny lost an arm, and Major Mills, of one of the infantry regiments, a volunteer in this charge, was killed actually within the gate; and thus ended the fighting of the eventful day which had been begun by the defeat of Valencia near

Contreras, and had witnessed the successive occupation by the American troops of San Angel, Coyoacan, San Antonio, and Churubusco.[1]

The various conflicts near Contreras and Churubusco on the nineteenth and twentieth of August were, in effect, parts of one single battle, and may be reviewed as a whole. It is to be observed, in the first place, that it is extremely difficult to form a satisfactory judgment as to the numbers engaged on either side. Valencia's force on the hill of Padierna was variously stated, the American estimates being apparently a great deal too high. His entire division, including cavalry, probably never amounted to five thousand men; and allowing some diminution from sickness he could hardly have had in his camp much over four thousand men. On the other hand, the attacking force west of the San Angel road consisted of four brigades of Scott's army with one large regiment of Pierce's brigade, and must have comprised almost half of Scott's army, or nearly five thousand men. The remainder of Pierce's brigade, with some artillery and other small detachments, which occupied the edge of the Pedregal east of the road, very likely brought the total American force on the field up to six thousand men.

The force which Santa Anna brought up with the intention of relieving and withdrawing Valencia from his position at Padierna, was also undoubtedly very much overestimated by the American officers. It consisted, as we have seen, principally of the brigade of General Francisco Pérez, together with the regiment of hussars constituting Santa Anna's personal escort, and a regiment of light cavalry of Vera Cruz, together with a field-battery of five guns. As Pérez had under him about three thousand five hundred

[1] Scott's official report of the day of Churubusco, with the reports of his subordinates, are in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 308–354. Santa Anna's report (dated Nov. 21, 1847) is printed in *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 99–101. For accounts by other eye-witnesses see Semmes, 395–400; Ripley, II, 246–255; Stevens, 67–74. See also *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 243–268; Ros Bárcena, *Invasion Americana*, 346–379, and the same author's *Vida de Gorostiza*, 94–111; and Wilcox, 378–397.

officers and men, and as Santa Anna brought up, in addition, probably less than a thousand, his whole force was something over four thousand; so that the two Mexican forces on the evening of the nineteenth—Valencia's and Santa Anna's—may be roughly estimated at eight thousand men.

Scott asserts that at Churubusco and its neighborhood the Mexicans had twenty-seven thousand men—another statement which is evidently exaggerated. The total Mexican force under arms a few days previous probably did not much exceed twenty thousand in all. From this must be deducted the cavalry division of Alvarez, which on the day of Churubusco was in observation east of San Agustin; the whole division of Valencia, or over four thousand men; a large part of the garrison of San Antonio which had fled easterly toward Mexicalcingo and the Peñon; and the detachments which had been left at the various gates of the city, or were posted at the Peñon and Chapultepec. It may therefore be concluded that the effective Mexican force at the bridge and convent of Churubusco, and along the road leading from the bridge toward the city, did not exceed nine thousand, or at most ten thousand men.

The American force attacking Churubusco consisted of Scott's entire army, with the exception of one regiment of Pennsylvania volunteers and a detachment of marines, who were left behind at San Agustin under Quitman to care for the principal depot and the hospitals at that point. Three hundred and fifty men of Worth's division were also left behind, to take care of his trains and baggage; and the fourth regiment of artillery, with small detachments of Pillow's force, had been left on the field of Padierna. The result is that the effective American force attacking Churubusco may be estimated at about eight thousand men.

With respect to the losses sustained on both sides it is not possible to speak with accuracy. The returns from the American army failed to distinguish between the losses on the nineteenth and the losses on the twentieth of August. The total for both days amounted to 137 killed, 879

wounded, and 40 missing; or, in all, aggregate losses of 1,056 —very nearly one-tenth of Scott's entire army.

The Mexican losses no one ever attempted to state in exact figures. The prisoners taken on the nineteenth and twentieth numbered 2,637 men and officers, including eight generals, two of whom—Anaya and Salas—had temporarily filled the office of President of the republic. Scott estimated the Mexican killed and wounded in those two days at four thousand of all ranks, which may very likely be an overestimate, although it is apparent that their losses must have been extremely heavy. But, in addition, a very large number of the men who fled were undoubtedly dispersed and never rejoined the ranks; so that the actual losses of the Mexican army in the two days may be stated, with some degree of probability, at not less than six thousand men.[1] In addition to the loss of men was the capture of all the Mexican artillery at Padierna and Churubusco—stated by Scott at thirty-seven pieces—and the capture or destruction of immense quantities of small-arms, ammunition, and other supplies.

Besides these material losses, the moral effect upon the Mexican troops constituted an even greater diminution of their effective fighting strength. The American army had now met and overcome the Mexicans in every battle of the war. They had fought in the open field, they had conducted a siege, and they had successfully stormed fortified positions deemed by the Mexicans impregnable. They had also in the valley of Mexico succeeded in turning, and thus capturing without fighting, the most strongly prepared outer defences of the capital. They were now at the city's gates and it was not to be expected that the rank and file of the Mexican army would thenceforward make any very obstinate defence against assailants who had shown themselves so superior in every variety of warfare.

The conduct of the American army so far as concerned the

[1] The Mexican official returns July 7, 1847, gave the total force in the capital as 17,448 men. This was exclusive of Valencia's Army of the North, and probably of the cavalry of Alvarez. On Aug. 30 the returns showed only 11,381 men, apparently rank and file only.—(*Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 138.)

vigor and courage of the men in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco was certainly beyond all praise. Undoubtedly the desperate position in which they found themselves—cut off from all possible support, in the midst of an enemy's country—had a great deal to do with the endurance and resolution with which they attacked superior forces fighting behind intrenchments; but in addition to this they were encouraged and emboldened, as the Mexican forces were dismayed, by the repeated victories of every one of the American armies. They had acquired the habit of victory, as the Mexicans had acquired the habit of defeat.

The dispositions of the several commanding officers were not equally free from criticism. The successive detachment of four brigades from Scott's forces during the afternoon of the nineteenth was obviously a measure that involved the most serious risks. These detachments were interposed, one after the other, in plain view of Scott and his staff, between superior forces of the enemy; and the only justification that can be alleged on behalf of the American commanders was, in the first place, the enormous advantages to be gained if the movement proved successful, and, in the second place, their knowledge of the superiority, man for man, of the American army to the Mexican.

A much more serious criticism was made in respect of the battle of Churubusco—a criticism which was hardly to be answered, as in the case of Contreras, by the successful result. Why, it was asked, was the battle of Churubusco fought at all? Scott had turned without loss the positions of El Peñon and Mexicalcingo and compelled their abandonment; and with only a trifling loss at Contreras, he had also turned the position of San Antonio. When he reached Coyoacan he was in a position where he could easily have turned the position of Churubusco; and if he had stopped long enough to reconnoitre the works constructed at the bridge and near the convent, it can hardly be believed that he would have attacked at all. Moreover, it seems likely that Santa Anna did not intend to make a serious stand at Churubusco, and only held it to delay the American advance.

"If Scott and Worth," says a Mexican author, "had halted at the village of Coyoacan and the hacienda of San Juan de Dios (in front of San Antonio) they could not—halt or no halt—have failed to occupy the entrenchments of the hacienda of San Antonio and the bridge and church of Churubusco, only a few hours later and without the slightest resistance. . . . And as to the moral effect which, according to Scott, facilitated and smoothed the way toward the capture of Mexico . . . the battle of Padierna would have sufficed to cause that result; since the advantages which he may have enjoyed from the capture of the other points disappeared, or were not a little diminished, in the face of the obstinacy and courage of the defence of the convent of Churubusco, and in face of the terrible reception which the invader met with that evening, when in pursuit of our soldiers, at the mouths of the guns at the gate of San Antonio Abad." [1]

Nor could Scott, if he had stopped to reflect, have failed to see that a direct attack on Churubusco was by no means essential for carrying out his plans. A glance at the map would have shown him that from the villages of San Angel and Coyoacan there was an abundance of good roads leading direct to the city of Mexico and to its westerly suburb of Tacubaya and the hill of Chapultepec. A movement along these roads that night would assuredly have led to the instant abandonment of Churubusco, which was the only fortified work still held by the Mexicans south of the city. In the direction of Tacubaya there were no works at all.

The answer to the question as to why Scott attacked Churubusco must therefore be found in some preconceived notion of his that the direct road between San Antonio and the city of Mexico was not strongly held, and that once the works at San Antonio had been disposed of the American army could march directly to the gates of Mexico. Undoubtedly the road through San Antonio and Churubusco—the Acapulco highway—was the most direct and the best road from his depot at San Agustin to the city, and if it had been free from obstruction it would have been a natural and desirable means of approach to the capital. But Scott was elated by the morning's victory at Padierna, and he pushed forward with his whole strength in order to gain the

[1] Ros Bárcena, 347

direct road, without stopping to ascertain what obstacles might be in his way. No doubt risks must be run in war, but in this case there seems to have been no reason to depart from the cautious policy which had heretofore enabled Scott to accomplish such great results with so trifling a loss. In front of Vera Cruz, at Cerro Gordo, and at Contreras, he had spent days in careful reconnoissances, in which the work of his admirable corps of engineers had laid the foundation for his victorious operations. But at Churubusco he attempted nothing of the sort. His troops were hurried forward into action without any knowledge of the Mexican position until they came under a destructive fire, and having become fully engaged he was forced to persist in his attacks upon a strong position held by a superior force. The result of the contest was determined by the excellent quality of the American army and by the good conduct of the officers commanding the three detached bodies into which Scott had divided his army, and over which it was impossible for him during the conflict to exert any adequate control. It was therefore the conclusion of most military critics that it was a mistake on Scott's part to have fought the battle of Churubusco at all, and that its successful result was by no means due to the foresight or to the dispositions made on the ground by the commander-in-chief.[1]

As to the Mexican generals, Santa Anna's conduct of the operations at the battle of Contreras has naturally been most severely criticised by Mexican writers, and indeed it is hard to account for his failure to attack vigorously the small force under Riley, Cadwalader, and Smith, which alone interposed between him and Valencia on Thursday afternoon. He received news as early as two o'clock that the Americans were attacking Valencia's position; but it was not, as he stated, until five o'clock that his troops reached the hills south and southwest of San Angel, where he found himself separated from Valencia by a deep ravine and opposed by a considerable part of Scott's army. His own explanation

[1] Ripley, II, 310–313, severely criticises Scott, while Stevens (78–82) warmly supports him.

was that he did not reach the field of battle until so late in the afternoon that he had no time to complete his reconnoissances before dark; that the ground in his front was too broken to enable him to attack the Americans; and that the weather that night was such that he had to withdraw his infantry nearly two miles to take shelter in the houses of San Angel.

In the latter respect his conduct certainly presented a very striking contrast to that of Smith and the other American officers at San Gerónimo. While the latter, exposed to the same torrents of rain which were driving Santa Anna to shelter, were making their preparations for a march at three o'clock in the morning, and were reconnoitring the line of their intended advance, Santa Anna, apart from sending messengers to Valencia with orders to retreat, was doing nothing to prepare for the combat of the following day. On Friday morning he moved early, but he had not even reached the position which he had occupied the night before by the time the Americans had reached and stormed Valencia's camp; and when he met the stream of fugitives he hastily marched back to Churubusco.

Santa Anna's lack of enterprise and activity upon this occasion may perhaps be explained partly by the traditional Spanish unwillingness to attack and partly by reasons already mentioned. He was undoubtedly affected by a deep distrust of his own men, and by Valencia's disobedience of orders which had resulted in upsetting the carefully meditated plan of a purely defensive attitude on the part of the Mexican army. Valencia's conduct was obviously inexcusable. His course, says Ripley, was "perfectly inconsistent with military art, reason or judgment." Even if his opinion had been correct that the proper strategy under the the circumstances was for the Mexican army to hold the line of the San Angel road in force, so as to prevent Scott's turning movement, nothing could possibly have justified his disobedience of the repeated orders to fall back from the position at Padierna, which he held with fully one-fifth of the whole Mexican army. Nor was his subsequent conduct

such as to redeem his character. He was never in danger of any real attack in front, and when he first saw the various American brigades descending from the Pedregal and crossing the road and advancing to San Gerónimo, he was in far stronger force and should evidently have made a vigorous effort to oppose the advance and thus defeat these detachments in detail. His efforts, however, to oppose Riley's advance were of the most feeble and ineffectual description, and he seems to have had little idea of defending himself, except to keep his men huddled together in the camp he had selected. Although he must have been warned of the danger of a night attack from the large American force which held the village of San Gerónimo, he threw out no adequate pickets; he did not even occupy the summit of the hill on the slope of which he was encamped; and the natural consequence of his neglect was the surprise and utter defeat at dawn on the following morning.

His defeat was followed by his own hasty and discreditable flight, which he continued to Toluca, in company with a part of his former army, who had managed to escape across the mountains. From Toluca he addressed a short note to the Minister of War on the following day, in which he expressed his intention of recruiting his force, and of explaining, whenever the voice of justice could be heard, his reasons for not returning to Mexico. On the day after that, he issued a manifesto in which he gave his own version of the battle, and explained that he had not gone to President Santa Anna's side because he feared that he might be insulted, and might then be unable to restrain himself.[1]

After the destruction of Valencia's army Santa Anna could hardly have acted otherwise than he did. As soon as he received news of the disaster he sent orders to Bravo at San Antonio and Gaona (one of his old Texas generals) at Mexicalcingo to fall back to the city at the gates of San Antonio and the Candelaria, respectively. Rangel, with his brigade, who had been ordered up to San Angel during the night, was directed to retreat to the gate of the Niño Perdido;

[1] Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Americana*, 341, 342.

while Santa Anna himself, with the brigade of Pérez and the other troops, retired to Churubusco. His intention seems to have been to withdraw all his men from that point, and to concentrate the entire army within the walls of the capital; but the movements of the Americans were too swift to enable him to continue his retreat, and he was forced to halt and face his pursuers.

On the Mexican side the action at Churubusco was merely the defence of strongly held intrenchments and buildings, which involved no particular skill. The defenders fought with the courage always characteristic of Spanish troops behind walls, although with despair in their hearts; and the Irish deserters fought with added desperation, from the knowledge that their lives were forfeited if they fell into the hands of their old comrades.[1] The defenders of the convent seem to have been in great part men of Spanish (not Indian) descent, and the Spaniards and Irishmen together proved the worthiest and most stubborn opponents that the American invaders had thus far met.

The sounds of battle had died away by sunset on Friday, but the events of the day were not yet over, for the commanding generals on both sides were compelled to provide for what the morning might bring forth. So far as Scott was concerned, the task was relatively easy. He had watched the contest at Churubusco from near the scene of Twiggs's attack on the convent, and when night fell he returned with his staff to the quarters they had occupied the night before at San Agustin. There he prepared orders for the movements of the several divisions on the next day, directing them, as he reported, "to take up battering or assaulting positions," and he also drew up a summons for the surrender of the city of Mexico.

Santa Anna, on his part, had taken little personal share

[1] A few days later the greater part of the captured deserters were hanged, after trial by court-martial, and the rest were flogged and branded, under the military code then in force. This severity, necessary as it may have been for the security of Scott's army, seems to have produced on the Mexican mind a strong impression of ruthlessness and barbarity.

in the battle of Churubusco. In the tardy official report of the action which he sent to the Mexican Secretary of War he reported that after posting the troops destined for the defence of the bridge and convent he busied himself with hastening the movement of the troops retreating from San Antonio; that he met Shields's attack on the road north of the bridge; and that when Churubusco was lost he had recognized the necessity of falling back to the second line of defence, and had reached the city between five and six o'clock in the afternoon.[1] In plainer words, Santa Anna, after watching the battle from a safe distance in the rear, had made good his escape with the rest of the fugitives.

He retired to the palace, says a contemporary Mexican account, in a state of deep despair, and hastened to assemble a number of his friends for consultation. His own conclusion was that it was indispensable to obtain a truce of some considerable duration, and after discussion it was agreed that a suspension of hostilities should be negotiated through the Spanish and English legations.[2] But if the Spanish chargé d'affaires was ever asked to intervene, his answer must have been a flat refusal. Certainly he took no steps in the desired direction, and he stated at a later day that he had been instructed by his government "to observe a strict neutrality during any negotiations that might take place."[3] The British agents, diplomatic and consular, were however, very willing to do what they could to promote peace, and in fact had already taken preliminary steps in that direction.

"The darkness of night," says a writer who was on the spot, "had hardly fallen on the 20th of August, and the smoke of Churubusco was still hanging lazily over the low and marshy grounds, when a coach containing a deputation from the English Embassy came out of the city and approached Worth's pickets at the Ladrillera. This deputation was composed of Thornton, the Secretary of Legation, and Mackintosh, the Consul General, accompanied by Rafael Berasa, the celebrated English courier, and as their mission was to General

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 100.
[2] *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 260.
[3] Doyle to Palmerston, Feb. 1, 1848, No. 13; *British F. O. MSS.*

Scott they were permitted to pass the outposts. It was now evident that Santa Anna, unable further to continue the defence with his army broken and dispirited, was disposed to open negotiations for an armistice."[1]

Of the individuals who made up this party, we have already seen that Edward Thornton was a young attaché (not secretary) of the British legation. Beraza was a Spaniard by birth, who had been of service to Wellington in the Peninsula. He subsequently became a naturalized British subject. He had been employed as courier ever since the first establishment of a British legation in Mexico, and had regularly, once a month, gone to and fro between Mexico and Vera Cruz.[2]

Mackintosh, the consul-general, was a member of the firm of Manning & Marshall, of London, who had been deeply concerned as bankers in the negotiations for readjusting the Mexican debt. As appeared a little later, he held a concession from the Mexican government for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec which he regarded as extremely valuable, and he had another lucrative contract for operating the mint in the city of Mexico for a period of ten years. His large interests in the country were believed to make him eager for peace.[3] He had lived long in Mexico and had married a Mexican lady.

Lieutenant Rafael Semmes, who was also at Worth's head-quarters at Ladrillera, three or four miles from the city, when the Englishmen arrived, gives another account of their reception.

[1] George W. Kendall, *The War Between the U. S. and Mexico Illustrated*, 35. Kendall was at this time present with Worth's division as correspondent of the New Orleans *Picayune*. He had been one of the Santa Fe prisoners, and was the author of a book giving a history of that absurd expedition.

[2] Trist to Buchanan, Oct. 1, 1847 (postscript); *State Dept. MSS.* Beraza's home was at Vera Cruz. He had some furniture damaged during Scott's bombardment, and applied to the Foreign Office to be allowed its value. Doyle, then in England, wrote an unofficial note in support of the application, giving Beraza an excellent character.

[3] "The soul [of the peace party] is Mr. Mackintosh the British Consul who has immense interests—perhaps everything—at stake upon the restoration of peace."—(Trist to Buchanan, Oct. 25, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.*)

"The commission," he says, "was entertained a few minutes by General Worth and then despatched, under an escort to the rear, to General Scott's headquarters. When they were gone Kendall, with the bluntness and frankness which characterise him, exclaimed: 'It's no use, we're humbugged—McIntosh is among them!' Kendall, some years before, had been a prisoner in Mexico, and knew the man well."[1]

But Kendall, and Worth for that matter, could not stop the party, and Thornton and his companions drove on to San Agustin, where they were listened to as "intelligent neutrals" by General Scott. Ostensibly they came to ask for a safeguard for the English minister and British subjects, says Hitchcock, "but really to prepare the way for peace";[2] and although no record of the interview has been preserved, their statements were echoed in Scott's subsequent correspondence.

At about midnight that same night the British minister received at his residence in the city of Mexico a visit from Pacheco, the Mexican Minister of Relations, who said he had come to ask Bankhead's good offices "in inducing General Scott to save the city from being sacked." Bankhead (as he reported) declined to interfere. He would do no more than "transmit" a letter from Pacheco to Trist.

"As the assistance of Great Britain was only partially admitted by the United States, towards bringing this war to an end," he explained to Lord Palmerston, "and as the Mexican Government have not condescended to give any answer to Her Majesty's gracious offer of Mediation and Good Offices, I refused to accede to Señor Pacheco's request further than to transmit his letter simply to Mr. Trist, offering to receive that Gentleman as Plenipotentiary for the discussion of whatever propositions the United States might have to make."[3]

But there must have been a good deal of other conversation with Pacheco that night which Bankhead did not

[1] Semmes, 412. The author says that General Mora, of the Mexican army, was with the party. This is evidently a mistake. Mora did not call upon Scott on the evening of the battle of Churubusco, but on the following morning.

[2] Hitchcock, 280. Thornton is reported as saying "that the city was perfectly astounded at our success—that the greatest consternation pervades the capital."

[3] Bankhead to Palmerston, Aug. 21, 1847, No. 76; *F. O. MSS.*

think it necessary to report to the Foreign Office, and there were undoubtedly other reasons than those stated for Bankhead's unwillingness to be personally concerned in the coming negotiations. He could hardly have been unaware of the *pourparlers* at Puebla. And he failed to report that Thornton and Mackintosh had visited Scott at San Agustin earlier that same evening, although in the despatch just quoted he referred to certain "private reasons" he had for thinking that Scott would accede to the proposals for an armistice.

Pacheco, of course, could not insist on Bankhead's going in person to Scott's camp, and was obliged to take what he could get; and so, while he waited, Bankhead composed a note to Trist.

"I have the honour," he wrote, "to transmit to you, at the earnest request of the Mexican Government, a letter addressed to you by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the contents of which are, I understand, to express the anxiety of the President not only to listen to and discuss whatever propositions the United States are willing to offer as Preliminary to the establishment of Relations between the two countries, but likewise to receive you at once as Plenipotentiary for that purpose. Although I have no authority to do more than transmit this letter to you, I trust that I shall be pardoned for expressing a sincere hope that both yourself and the General in Chief may feel justified in taking this expression of good will on the part of Mexico into your early and favourable consideration with a view, if possible, of saving this Capital from the horrors of War."[1]

With this note, which in its last clause went very near begging for an armistice, Pacheco returned to the palace to prepare his own communication. His note was soon ready, but it was not addressed to Trist. The Mexican authorities were unwilling to appear to initiate any negotiations, and therefore the note was, in form, merely a reply to Buchanan's note of the previous April, over which Santa Anna and the Mexican Congress had wasted so much time in July.[2] The Mexican executive had at last concluded to take the committee of Congress at its word, to assume that

[1] Bankhead to Trist, Aug. 20, 1847; copy enclosed with Bankhead's despatch No. 82 of Aug. 20, 1847; *ibid.*

[2] See pages 444–446, above.

the law of April 20, 1847, which denounced as a traitor any man who opened negotiations with the Americans, had been impliedly repealed, and to profess a willingness to consider terms of peace.

Pacheco's reply to Buchanan was therefore drawn in this sense, and was not unskilfully worded. The results of battles, it ran, were not always in accordance with the justice of the cause for which they were waged. The President of the republic had continued fighting up to the moment when the American troops were at the gates of the capital, and he was now bound to listen to other duties which he owed as chief magistrate of the nation. Acting under the powers conferred on him by the Constitution, he had resolved to hear the proposals which Mr. Trist was instructed to make, provided they were advantageous to both parties and—as had been publicly asserted—they were consistent with the honor of the Mexican republic (*dejen á cubierto el honor de la república Mexicana*). All this, he added, was on the understanding that the Mexican government would undertake to discuss preliminaries of peace, and that a definitive treaty should be concluded within a year, and submitted, according to the Constitution of Mexico, to the approval of the proper authorities.[1]

This last qualification was too much for Bankhead's comprehension; and so in forwarding Pacheco's note he added a hurried private note of his own to Trist, in which he expressed the hope that the Americans would "yield at once" to the Mexican wishes, although, he continued,

"with respect to that part of the note which relates to the period for the conclusion of a treaty; I own I do not understand its meaning; but I have no doubt that it could easily be arranged among other matters when you come to talk with the Mexican Plenipotentiary upon the great point at issue, namely the re-establishment of Relations."[2]

[1] *En la inteligencia de que el gobierno Mexicano se prestará á que se abran preliminares de paz no pasando de un año el término dentro de cual haya de celebrarse un tratado y sometiéndose éste, segun la constitución del país, á la aprobación de la autoridad á quien ella comete esta atribución.*—(Pacheco to Buchanan, Aug. 20, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 189.)

[2] Bankhead to Trist (private), Aug. 21, 1847; enclosure with Trist's despatch No. 13, of Aug. 22, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.*

These three notes—two from Bankhead to Trist and one from Pacheco to Buchanan—were then intrusted to General Mora y Villamil—a man of character, reputed a friend of peace, who had served at Buena Vista as Santa Anna's chief engineer, and had also been engaged in the short campaign in the valley of Mexico. He bore no other written communication from his government. Driving out in "a handsome carriage," with Señor Arrangoiz (the late consul at New Orleans) as interpreter, Mora met Scott at the village of Coyoacan on his way from San Agustin to Tacubaya. Colonel Hitchcock, who was present with the rest of the staff, noted the interview in his diary at noon on Saturday, August 21.

"General Mora," he says, "was presented to General Scott. All gave way at once for the interview between the two generals and Mr. Trist, the American commissioner. The Mexican handed a parcel to General Scott, who handed it over to Mr. Trist, who broke the seal and read the enclosure. The parties have now been in conference over half an hour under the shade of a tree. We outsiders suppose communications have been opened between the Mexican Government and ours, and we hope it may be the beginning of a peace."[1]

[1] Hitchcock, 279–280.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### A FUTILE ARMISTICE

Some weeks before the battle of Churubusco Scott's secret negotiations with certain agents for the Mexican government had terminated with what he regarded as definite assurances of Santa Anna's earnest desire to conclude a peace; but these assurances had been coupled with a statement that proposals for peace could not be openly entertained until the American army had advanced close to the city of Mexico, and Scott had gone so far as to write a memorandum announcing his purpose to defeat the Mexican army in view of their own capital, and then "give those in the City an opportunity to save the capital by making a peace."

The conditions contemplated had now arisen. The Mexican positions at the Peñon, at Mexicalcingo and at the hacienda of San Antonio were in possession of the Americans. Not one but two battles had been fought "in view of the capital." Valencia's Army of the North had been either captured or dispersed, and the bloody battle of Churubusco had resulted in Santa Anna's main army being put to flight and driven in disorder through the gates of the city. When, therefore, General Mora appeared bearing written proposals to open negotiations for peace, Scott, not unnaturally, saw in this offer a fulfilment of the assurances given him at Puebla. Moreover, the visit of English diplomatic and consular officers to Scott's head-quarters the night before had probably served to confirm this belief, for British subjects had previously acted as Santa Anna's agents, and indeed it is not unlikely that Mackintosh himself may have been the chief go-between.[1]

[1] Scott's faithful Hitchcock a few days later confessed to "lurking doubts" of Mackintosh. "We know that he has advanced Santa Anna money for the

Scott, therefore, being possessed of a perfectly honest and sincere desire to end the war, was fully persuaded that Santa Anna, in offering to receive Trist, was actuated by the same honest wish for peace. It is true that Scott's ready assumption of candor and good faith on the part of his adversary did little credit to his knowledge of Santa Anna's character and history. From the date of the two treaties with the Texans in 1836 every act of Santa Anna's life showed that his promises were not to be relied upon for one single moment, and that he was ready to betray any individual or violate any pledge which stood in the path of his ambition. But Scott was too eager to be critical. Besides being the general in command of a victorious army, he was also a conspicuous candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and all his acts and hopes at this period of his career were colored and affected by his desire for political success; and it cannot be doubted that in dealing with the Mexican government he had his own personal fortunes constantly in mind, and believed they would be advanced as much or more by the early signature of a treaty of peace as they could be by any further military advantages he might gain.

Military conditions, however, were not entirely forgotten in Scott's calculations. He had thus far been astonishingly successful at Vera Cruz, at Cerro Gordo, at Contreras, and at Churubusco, but his army was weakened by disease and the casualties of battle. A few more victories such as that of Churubusco might be equivalent to the destruction of his army, and he may very well have welcomed an opportunity to escape the unavoidable risks of further attacks upon fortifications held by forces immensely superior in numbers to his own. In his autobiography he touches upon these military reasons. "If we had proceeded," he wrote, "to assault the city by daylight our loss would have been dangerously great, and if a little later in the night, the slain, on the other side,

support of his army at the very time when he was holding out hopes of peace to detain us at Puebla. His object was to gain time for Santa Anna to raise, equip, and discipline his troops and provide himself with cannon."—(Note in diary of Sept. 10, 1847. Hitchcock, 299.)

including men, women, and children, would have been frightful, because if the assailants stopped to make prisoners before occupying all the strongholds, they would soon become prisoners themselves."[1] The validity of these military reasons was seriously doubted by some of Scott's principal officers, but at least it may be said they were of a nature which, as Scott entertained them, were a sufficient justification for his action.

Writing to the War Department at the time to explain and defend his acts, Scott reviewed his situation and stated his motives as follows:

"After so many victories, we might, with but little additional loss, have occupied the capital the same evening. But Mr. Trist, commissioner, &c., as well as myself, had been admonished by the best friends of peace—intelligent neutrals and some American residents—against precipitation; lest, by wantonly driving away the government and others—dishonored—we might scatter the elements of peace, excite a spirit of national desperation, and thus indefinitely postpone the hope of accommodation. Deeply impressed with this danger; and remembering our mission—to conquer a peace—the army very cheerfully sacrificed to patriotism—to the great wish and want of our country—the éclat that would have followed an entrance—sword in hand—into a great capital. Willing to leave something to this republic—of no immediate value to us—on which to rest her pride, and to recover temper—I halted our victorious corps at the gates of the city (at least for a time), and have them now cantoned in the neighboring villages, where they are well sheltered and supplied with all necessaries.

"On the morning of the 21st, being about to take up battering or assaulting positions, to authorise me to summon the city to surrender, or to sign an armistice with a pledge to enter at once into negotiations for peace—a mission came out to propose a truce. Rejecting its terms, I despatched my contemplated note to President Santa Anna—omitting the summons."[2]

[1] *Autobiography*, 498. Trist, who was at this time wholly in Scott's confidence, emphasized this view, and wrote that an attack on the city was "forbidden by considerations of humanity toward the unoffending inhabitants, to say nothing of the reasons of policy which stood in the way, or of the condition of our troops, who were in a state imperatively demanding food and rest."—(Trist to Buchanan, Aug. 22, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 189. Italics in original.)

[2] Scott to Marcy, Aug. 28, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 314. The terms proposed by Mora are said to have been a truce for twelve months!—(Hitchcock, 284.) The "intelligent neutrals" were, of course, Mackintosh and other British friends of Santa Anna. Of the American residents who advised Scott, Mr. Louis Hargous must have been one.

Scott's statement no doubt represented with accuracy some of the motives which had induced him to refrain from an immediate attack on the city; but he was not quite ingenuous. He failed to report then, or in any of his communications to his government, the secret negotiations which he had carried on at Puebla; and he also failed to mention the circumstance, which the Mexicans at least regarded as important, that no request for an armistice was made to him in writing. Whatever were the proposals for a truce which were made by Mora and which Scott says he rejected, they were verbal, and probably were made without any written instructions; the object being, of course, to enable Santa Anna to disavow Mora in case of need, and in any case to make it appear to the world that it was Scott who had asked for a suspension of hostilities and that it was Santa Anna who had graciously assented.[1]

Scott and Trist must have failed to see through this very simple manœuvre, which was of course intended to save the face of the Mexican President. Scott's frank and unimaginative intellect was not cast in a mould to enable him to apprehend the thoroughly Oriental ingenuity of his adversary, and Trist was too completely under the spell of Scott's far stronger character to think for himself on such an occasion. Nor had Scott a quick mind. Given time and opportunity, he could plan with a comprehensive thoroughness which was of inestimable value; but he was slow to change his plans if unforeseen conditions arose, and was not fertile in expedients to meet the unexpected. He had clearly made up his mind, before Mora's arrival in camp, as to the proper course to be pursued; and having once done so, he was entirely unable to see how greatly that visit had changed the

[1] There were rumors in Mexico that Santa Anna had not authorised Mora's mission at all. A letter from a volunteer who had been in Rangel's brigade at San Angel, writing to a friend the day after Churubusco, says: "Basadre, Mora y Villamil and Arrangois started at daybreak this morning, with orders from Pacheco, to ask Scott for 30 hours' armistice in order to bury the dead and collect the wounded. Santa Anna became very angry and said, this cursed Pacheco has made a fool of himself and compromised me." No doubt this was the story Santa Anna wished to have people believe. See "intercepted letters" printed in Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 445.

situation or what diplomatic advantages might be gained from the fact of Santa Anna's begging for time.

What Scott, according to his own report, had determined to do was to write to Santa Anna summoning the city, but at the same time offering, as an alternative, to sign an armistice on receiving a "pledge" to negotiate for peace. This might have been well enough on Friday night; but on Saturday morning, after the Mexican government had itself made overtures for a suspension of hostilities, much higher ground might very naturally have been taken. Scott, however, as a reply to Mora's proposals, merely weakened the document he had already prepared by omitting the demand for a surrender of the city, and in that form it was sent off to Santa Anna.

This imprudent, but highly characteristic letter which, having been composed the night before, contained no hint whatever of Mora's mission, and no reference to the written communications of Bankhead and Pacheco, ran as follows:

"Sir:

"Too much blood has already been shed in this unnatural war between the two great republics of this continent. It is time that the differences between them should be amicably and honorably settled. Your excellency knows that there is with this army a commissioner on the part of the United States invested with plenary powers to that end. In order to open the way for the two republics to enter into negotiations, I desire to execute, on reasonable terms, a short armistice.

"I await with impatience until to-morrow morning for an answer to this communication; but in the meantime I will take and occupy such positions without the capital as I may consider necessary to the shelter and convenience of this army."[1]

Scott's apparently spontaneous expression of a wish to stop fighting was, of course, precisely what the Mexican authorities must have hoped for; and the reference to an "unnatural" war was still more to their taste. Santa Anna, therefore, at once replied through his Secretary of War, in language which, by its singularly insolent tone, was well calculated to gratify the Mexican newspapers.

[1] Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 308.

"It is certainly lamentable," wrote General Alcorta, "that a lack of consideration for the rights of the Mexican Republic should have led inevitably to the shedding of blood by the two first Republics of this American continent, and with great exactness Your Excellency has characterised this war as unnatural—not alone by reason of its motives, but likewise on account of the antecedents of the two nations whose interests and relations are so closely identified. The proposition of an armistice to put an end to this scandal, has been acceded to with pleasure (*ha sido admitida con agrado*) by His Excellency the President, Commander in chief, because it will enable those proposals for an honorable termination of the war to be listened to, which may be made by the Commissioner of the President of the United States of America.

"In consequence, His Excellency the President, Commander in chief, directs me to inform Your Excellency that he accepts your proposal to conclude an armistice, and for this purpose has appointed Brigadier Generals Ignacio Mora y Villamil and Benito Quijano, who will attend at such place and time as you may appoint."[1]

Before this reply was received, Scott had begun moving his army to more permanent camps in the villages south and west of the city. Worth's division was ordered to Tacubaya, Twiggs fell back to San Angel, Pillow to Mixcoac—between San Angel and Tacubaya—and Quitman remained at San Antonio. Every one of these positions might have been occupied twenty-four hours earlier, without firing a shot, before Churubusco was attacked. Scott himself established his head-quarters in the Palace of the Archbishop of Mexico on a hill above the village of Tacubaya.

Having received Santa Anna's reply, Scott on the morning of the twenty-second of August appointed Generals Quitman, Smith, and Pierce, all lawyers of experience, to be the American commissioners for negotiating an armistice, but they were given little discretion, for Scott himself drew up proposed articles which were to serve as a basis of discussion.[2]

At five o'clock on that same afternoon the commissioners met at the house of Mr. Mackintosh, the British consul, in Tacubaya. "We sat up the whole night," says Semmes,

[1] *Ibid.*, 350. The translation of this paper in the same document (page 308) is inaccurate in numerous respects.

[2] Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 543.

who acted as American secretary and interpreter, "disputing with our opponents, about the *wording* of a few articles, to the precise phraseology of which, Señor Mora, who did all the talking on the Mexican side, attached great importance." But at length the agreement was completed and ratified, with some amendments, by the commanding generals on both sides, and was published on Tuesday, the twenty-fourth of August.[1]

In the form finally approved, the paper provided that there should be an immediate cessation of all hostilities within thirty leagues of the capital, "for the purpose of enabling the government of Mexico to take into consideration the propositions which the Commissioner on the part of the President of the United States of America has to make." The armistice was to continue during the period of negotiations, or until forty-eight hours' notice from either party to the other. No new fortifications were to be begun; old works were not to be enlarged or strengthened; neither army was to be reinforced, nor to advance "beyond the line it at present occupies"; provisions were to be allowed to enter the city; and the American army was to be free to obtain supplies from city or country. Prisoners were to be exchanged. In places occupied by American troops, the local administration of justice as between Mexican citizens was not to be interrupted, and private property was to be respected.

Scott had thus yielded everything and had obtained nothing. He had not received a "pledge" of any kind, beyond the implied undertaking that Mexico would "take into consideration the American proposals." "I am very willing to treat with you for your first volume, which is the armistice," said Bismarck to Thiers under somewhat similar circumstances in November, 1870, "provided you can promise me volume two, which is peace";[2] but Scott, who was no Bis-

[1] *Ibid.*, 512. The Spanish text is in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 352–354. It was reported (at least at Pillow's head-quarters) that Quitman was opposed to the terms of the armistice, although he ultimately signed it.—(Ripley, II, 326; Semmes, 419.)

[2] Rémusat, *Thiers*, 182.

marck, signed for volume one without obtaining any promise that the second volume would ever be forthcoming.

A more serious mistake was the total failure to exact material guarantees. At the suggestion of Generals Worth and Pillow, Scott had instructed his representatives to insist upon the evacuation of Chapultepec by the Mexican forces.[1] This demand was opposed by the representatives of Santa Anna, who argued that a surrender of Chapultepec would be humiliating to Mexican pride, would have as evil an effect as the surrender of the capital itself, and would defeat any hope of a peace.[2] It is evident that this reasoning was without foundation. That a total dispersal of the existing government of Mexico, such as would probably have followed an occupation of the city by Scott's army, would defeat—or at least delay—any hope of peace, was quite possible. But that the occupation of one more point in the vicinity could produce any such result was obviously absurd. On the contrary, the occupation of so conspicuous a position as Chapultepec, the American flag waving over the palace of the viceroys, must have been the strongest and most striking argument for peace.[3] Scott, however, seems never to have been much impressed by the importance of the suggestions made to him on this head; and therefore, when the commissioners to negotiate the armistice referred the point back to him, he instructed them not to insist on the demand, though he must have seen that Santa Anna's necessities were such that any conditions whatever would have been accepted.

Whether Scott was wise in agreeing to an armistice at this stage of his operations is a point about which opinions may

[1] Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 191–198, 543. Pillow reinforced his verbal expression of opinion by a note, urging that the surrender of Chapultepec should be insisted on "at all hazards."—(*Ibid.*, 170, 520.)

[2] Ripley, II, 325.

[3] By the terms of the armistice signed by Bismarck and Jules Favre on Jan. 28, 1871, hostilities were to cease throughout France for a fixed period of twenty-one days, during which the Government of National Defence was to summon an assembly of the French people to decide the question whether the war was to continue, or whether and under what conditions peace was to be concluded. The detached forts about Paris were to be handed over to the German army, the guns of the *enceinte* were to be dismounted, and the garrison disarmed.

very well differ. But there cannot be two opinions as to the imprudence of giving his beaten enemies the breathing space they had asked for, without receiving any promises or guarantees whatever. In a little more than a fortnight the fatal results of Scott's amiable weakness were to be strikingly disclosed.

Trist, on his part, was untroubled by any misgivings. He believed as fully as Scott in the sincerity of Santa Anna's profession of a desire for peace, and was confident, therefore, of success in the proposed negotiations. Writing on the night the terms of the armistice were under discussion, he said:

"I feel perfectly satisfied from every indication, and after two interviews with Mr. M[ackintosh] and Mr. T[hornton] that S[anta] A[nna] will promote, to the utmost of his ability, the negotiation of a treaty; and that, aided by money advanced by ——, he will omit no effort in his power to procure its early ratification."[1]

Two days later, however, Trist wrote again repeating his assertions as to Santa Anna, but sounding a note of warning as to the temper of Congress.

"I am happy to say," he observed, "that the prospect in regard to the object of my mission is, to a certain point, most auspicious. The negotiation of a treaty I look upon as next to certain. The difficulty —and a most serious difficulty it threatens to prove—will lie in the ratification. . . . The no-quorum game has been persisted in by Congress, and any change in this respect is hopeless. Santa Anna can now count upon the support of but a very small minority in that body, and nothing which he can now do will receive its sanction—the factions which compose it being resolutely bent upon his destruction."[2]

But whatever conjectures might be formed respecting the hostility of Congress to a treaty of peace, it was evident that the first thing for Trist to do was to try to get some sort of treaty signed by Santa Anna. To this end Trist thought it essential to avoid, as far as practicable, affording the Presi-

[1] Trist to Buchanan, Aug. 22, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.* (Extract printed in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 187–189). There is no indication as to how the blank is to be filled up.

[2] Same to same, Aug. 24, 1847; *ibid.* (Extract printed in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 190–191.)

dent's enemies any ground for saying that the interests and honor of the nation had been sacrificed.[1] Trist, therefore, wrote to the Minister of Relations on the same day—the day the terms of the armistice were finally agreed to and published—requesting him to name a place and time for meeting; to which Pacheco replied that the President was then engaged in the selection of commissioners, but that they would be ready to meet Mr. Trist on Friday afternoon, the twenty-seventh of August.[2] The excuse for delay was truthful. The Mexican cabinet had been busy preparing for such a meeting, and were really not yet ready.

Their first step had been to try once more to induce Congress to bear some part of the responsibility for the approaching negotiations. Early on August 21—the day after Churubusco—an official letter had been sent to Señor Salonio, the President of Congress, asking that a special session should be held that same afternoon. All Mexicans, so the letter ran, were witnesses to the extraordinary exertions and intrepid valor of General Santa Anna—but victory had frowned on him, and the enemy was at the gates. Under the circumstances, "availing himself of his constitutional powers, and in conformity with the decision of the general Congress communicated on July 16 last, he has resolved to hear the propositions which Don Nicholas Trist has come to make"; and it was his desire that Congress should take its appropriate part in these highly interesting negotiations.

But Congress was not to be caught in any such trap. Many deputies, the President of Congress replied, had left the city, and although every effort had been and would be made, a quorum had not yet been obtained.[3] A week later the British minister wrote:

"Personal dislike and miserable party intrigues have hitherto prevailed to prevent the assembly of a sufficient number of Members to form a House. It is not impossible that General Santa Anna might

[1] Same despatch.
[2] Trist to Pacheco, Aug. 25; Pacheco to Trist, Aug. 26, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 315, 316.
[3] Pacheco to the President of Congress; Salonio to Pacheco, Aug. 21, 1847; *ibid.*, 351.

have anticipated this, and called the Congress together as a mere formality; but the conduct of its members has given a handle to General Santa Anna, in case he should be desirous, as many suppose, of declaring himself Dictator, thus doing away altogether with the functions of Congress."[1]

Whether any such coup d'état was in contemplation or not, the fact remained that no quorum of Congress was obtained while the armistice continued, or for many weeks after.

The executive being thus left to assume an undivided responsibility, the next step was to appoint commissioners; and ex-President Herrera, Antonio Monjardin (a member of the Supreme Court), and Antonio Garay (a lawyer of some note) were selected. With one accord they declined the dangerous honor—Monjardin and Garay on the modest ground of being unequal to the task, and Herrera on the honest ground that he had been vilified and driven from office for merely suggesting that the American proposals might be listened to, and that consequently his presence on the commission might do more harm than good.[2]

Santa Anna let Monjardin and Garay go, and appointed in their places Bernardo Couto and Miguel Atristain—"lawyers of eminence," according to the British minister[3]—who consented to serve. Herrera, on the other hand, was appealed to as a matter of patriotic duty to reconsider his determination, and did so with reluctance. And finally, the name of General Mora y Villamil was added to the list.[4]

On the morning of the day the commissioners were to hold their first meeting an occurrence took place which nearly wrecked the negotiations. A number of wagons, driven by unarmed teamsters, were sent into the city by Scott's quar-

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, Aug. 29, 1847, No. 83; *F. O. MSS.*

[2] Pacheco to Herrera, Monjardin, and Garay; Herrera *et al.* to Pacheco, Aug. 25, 26, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 358–360.

[3] Bankhead to Palmerston, Aug. 27, 1847, No. 77; *F. O. MSS.* Atristain is said to have been attorney for Manning & Marshall, Mackintosh's firm, and to have been put on the commission through Mackintosh's influence.—(*Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 269.)

[4] Pacheco to Herrera, Couto, Atristain, and Mora; Herrera *et al.* to Pacheco, Aug. 26, 27, 28, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 361–363.

termasters—pursuant to the express terms of the armistice—to obtain supplies and to get drafts on the American Treasury exchanged for coin. Mr. Louis Hargous, an American merchant doing business in Vera Cruz and Mexico, had arranged for the money and for the purchase of the needed supplies. The wagons, at about seven in the morning, were met at the city gates by a party of some forty Mexican lancers and escorted to the great square of the city. Their appearance was the occasion for the assemblage of a large mob, who soon proceeded, to the accompaniment of cries of *Mueran los Yankees!* to attack the teamsters with sticks and stones. The lancers tried to interfere, and the cries changed to *Muera Santa Anna por traidor!* A formidable riot broke out, which ex-President Herrera and a few troops ultimately put down, but not until one teamster had been killed and several badly hurt. The Mexican government apologized, and Scott, for the time being, passed the incident over; but a night or two afterward Hargous's store was sacked, and the American army got no supplies from the city while the armistice continued.

The meeting between Trist and the Mexican commissioners was, however, duly held on the afternoon following the attack on the wagons, and the credentials on both sides were exhibited. The Mexicans, it appeared, had not been furnished with full powers—their credentials authorising them merely to receive and transmit such propositions as Trist might present. They had also been strictly enjoined to refrain from offering any suggestion of their own in answer to anything Trist might present.[1] An attitude of great reserve on the part of the Mexican representatives was not unreasonable pending presentation of the American demands; and Trist showed good sense in merely pointing out the insufficiency of such powers as they had, and in delivering at once the *projet* of a treaty with which he had been furnished at Washington six months before.[2] By this time a week had elapsed since the battle of Churubusco.

[1] Pacheco to commissioners, Aug. 25, 1847; *ibid.*, 361.
[2] Trist to Buchanan, Aug. 29, 1847; *ibid.*, 191.

The government of Mexico was now finally brought face to face with the question of what answer was to be made to the American proposals. The subject had, of course, been previously discussed. On the day the agreement for an armistice was ratified, and without any accurate knowledge of what the United States would demand, Pacheco had submitted to the cabinet a statement of the bases on which he thought peace might properly be concluded.[1] This paper, which was approved and signed by President Santa Anna and his four ministers, was chiefly interesting as a monument of the folly of its author. With the American troops encamped at the gates of the city and in possession of the better part of the republic, with the Mexican armies broken and dispersed as the result of an uninterrupted succession of defeats, Pacheco could actually propose as the fundamental basis of discussion that the negotiations must proceed as if Mexico had triumphed and could continue to wage war with success. It is unnecessary to consider the details of this absurd document, which was never communicated to Trist, and which Santa Anna probably accepted as something that could conveniently be given to the newspapers in case the negotiations should fail.

As soon as the real American terms were received, Pacheco drew up another paper, in the form of instructions for the commissioners. He began by directing them to ask Trist for answers to three questions: What are the motives and objects of the war? Are the demands of the United States founded on the right of conquest, or are they put forward as a basis for friendly negotiation? Is Texas to remain in the hands of the United States as the result of annexation, or by virtue of purchase from Mexico? If Trist declined to answer, his refusal was to be noted.

Pacheco then turned to the terms of peace. Mexico would give up Texas, but the boundary must begin at the Nueces River. The United States must release Mexico from all pecuniary claims, and, in addition, must pay for

[1] "*Puntos que deberán tratarse en las conferencias con el comisionado de los Estados Unidos, y que deberán servir de bases á los de México*"—(*Ibid.*, 355.)

Texas a sum equal to one-half the amount which was fixed by American laws as the price of public lands. The Californias and New Mexico were not to be ceded; but as a last resort the Mexican commissioners might consent to the establishment of an American "factory" at San Francisco. The right of transit over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec must be refused. Goods introduced into Mexico through ports occupied by the American forces must pay duties to Mexico, even though they had already paid duties to the United States. All American troops must be withdrawn the moment the treaty was signed, without waiting for ratification by Congress; and the United States must restore all fortifications with their artillery, in as good condition as when taken. And finally (though this was not to be considered a *sine quâ non*) the United States ought to pay the expenses of a war "which Mexico found itself forced to make and which it did not provoke." This paper also was approved by the President and his cabinet on Sunday, the twenty-ninth of August.

That Santa Anna should have permitted such instructions to be given to his agents is surprising. To have insisted upon them was evidently equivalent to the immediate breaking off of negotiations before the Mexican army had had time to gain all the benefits of the armistice, but it is possible that Santa Anna intended not to insist on these terms; and, as it turned out, the instructions were practically abandoned before the negotiations were resumed.[1]

The Mexican commissioners, on Monday, August 30, were furnished with full powers, and were also given copies of the "instructions" of August 29 and the "bases" of August 24. The result was their immediate resignation. "We think it our duty," they wrote, "to state at once to the Supreme Government, with the frankness of honorable men, that it is impossible for us to take charge of the negotiation upon the said bases and instructions." Santa Anna being by no

[1] "*Instrucciones . . . acordadas en junta de ministros de 29 de Agosto, 1847, en vista de las proposiciones hechas por el comisionado de los Estados Unidos.*" —(*Ibid.*, 369–371.)

means ready to abandon the negotiation, and thus terminate the armistice, thereupon directed Pacheco to cancel the orders to the commissioners; and they were notified that the instructions given them were only to be followed as far as might prove possible, and that the plenipotentiaries might adopt "such modifications as the circumstances of the nation call for, with any concessions for which the discussion itself may open the door."[1]

Thus freed from the trammels of Pacheco's impossible requirements, Herrera and his colleagues took up in earnest, and with apparent sincerity, the work intrusted to them. On Wednesday, the first, and again on Thursday, the second of September, they had what Trist called a "very unreserved" conversation, which turned mainly on questions of boundary. The chief stumbling block was not California, as might perhaps have been expected, but New Mexico, though the old question of the Nueces River was also debated. For a short time a solution seemed within reach. Trist offered to abandon Lower California and the right of transit over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, if New Mexico and Upper California were ceded for a pecuniary consideration, and he also offered to submit the question of the Nueces to the American government. The Mexican plenipotentiaries agreed to submit this offer to their own government; and Trist promised that, if it proved acceptable, he would also propose to Scott a continuance of the armistice until a reply could be received from Washington in regard to the Nueces question—a period he estimated at about six weeks.[2]

Trist, however, was not called on to submit these terms to Washington, for Santa Anna finally decided to reject them himself.[3] On Monday afternoon, the sixth of September,

[1] Herrera, Couto, Atristain, and Mora to Pacheco; Pacheco to Herrera, *et al.* Aug. 31, 1847; *ibid.*, 372, 373.

[2] Trist to Buchanan, Sept. 4; Herrera *et al.* to Pacheco, Sept. 7, 1847; *ibid.*, 196, 383. Among other questions discussed was that of excluding slavery from any ceded territory—a suggestion which Trist (according to his own report) dismissed with extravagant emphasis. As the United States Senate was then constituted, the thing was evidently impossible.

[3] This decision is said to have followed a series of conferences in the palace, where the best opinion favored accepting the American terms.—(*Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 278.)

the plenipotentiaries again met, and Trist was handed a counter-project of a treaty, together with an explanatory note, in which the cession of New Mexico was definitely refused, but an offer was made to grant so much of Upper California as lay north of latitude 37°; thus conveying San Francisco and the Sacramento valley to the United States, and retaining Monterey and Los Angeles and San Diego as a part of Mexico. The note also contained the naive suggestion that Great Britain should be asked to guarantee the observance of the treaty.

"The peace between the two countries," said the Mexican commissioners, "will be more solidly established, if a friendly power (England), which has so nobly offered its good offices to Mexico and the United States in the present contest, will now consent to grant its guarantee for the faithful performance of the treaty which may be concluded. The Government of Mexico considers that it would be very proper to solicit such a guarantee."[1]

Trist had no option under his instructions, as he had fully explained at the previous conferences. He therefore stated the moment the Mexican note was read, that the terms were inadmissible, and that he considered the negotiations at an end,[2] and both parties accepted the fact that the peremptory refusal of the Mexican government to cede New Mexico and the southern half of Upper California terminated all discussion.

By the express language of the agreement of August 23 the armistice came to an end with the close of negotiations, but Scott, for some strange reason of his own, preferred to terminate it on other grounds. He therefore, in an unlucky hour, composed a letter to Santa Anna, dated the day after

[1] Herrera *et al.* to Trist, Sept. 6, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 378. The counter-project was drawn by Pacheco, who sent it to the Mexican commissioners with a note, in which he accurately summed up his position thus: "In New Mexico, and the few leagues which divide the right bank of the Nueces from the left bank of the Bravo, is contained either peace or war. If the commissioner of the United States leaves nothing else to the government of Mexico than to choose between this cession and death, in vain was he sent by his government."—(Pacheco to Herrera *et al.* Sept. 5, 1847; *ibid.*, 378.)

[2] Roa Bárcena, 402.

the last meeting of the negotiators, in which he asserted that the terms of the armistice had been repeatedly violated by Mexico, first in failing to allow the American troops to obtain supplies in the city, and second in erecting new fortifications. Unless complete satisfaction was forthcoming by noon on the following day, he would consider the armistice at an end.[1]

These complaints were very likely well founded; but it was entirely unnecessary, and therefore unwise, to raise an issue as to the good faith of the Mexican government. The armistice might have been terminated on the sufficient and indisputable ground that the peace negotiations were at an end; so that the only result of making insulting charges was to give General Santa Anna an opportunity to show once more his dialectic superiority to General Scott. It was not true, Santa Anna wrote, that the Mexican government had impeded the furnishing of supplies. On the contrary, it had done everything to facilitate the American agents. It was also false that any new work of fortification had been begun by the Mexicans. They, rather, had on their side numberless causes of complaint—the establishment by the Americans of a masked battery in Tacubaya, "the violation of temples consecrated to the worship of God," the robbery of sacred vessels from the churches, the profanation of venerated images, the sacking of towns. Not without grief and even indignation had he received such news. He had been deeply affected by the complaints by fathers and husbands of violence offered to their daughters and wives. Nevertheless he had remained silent that he might not embarrass a negotiation which offered some hopes of putting an end to a scandalous war, "which Your Excellency has, with so much justice, described as unnatural."

"I am quite aware," he continued, "that the true, the unconcealable cause of the threats of renewed hostilities which Your Excellency's note contains, is that I would not lend myself to sign a treaty which not only would considerably diminish the territory of the republic, but would also affect that dignity and honor which all nations defend

[1] Scott to Santa Anna, Sept. 6, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 346.

at every hazard. And if these considerations have not the like weight in Your Excellency's breast, yours will be the responsibility before the world, which readily discovers on whose side lie moderation and justice.

"I flatter myself that Your Excellency on calm reflection will become convinced that these reasons are well founded. But if unfortunately you shall seek nothing else than a pretext for depriving the first city of the American continent of any means of preserving the defenceless part of its population from the horrors of war, then no other mode of saving it will be left me, than to repel force by force with that decision and energy which my high obligations prescribe."[1]

With these brave words—which he did not omit to give to the newspapers—Santa Anna finally threw away the scabbard and declared in favor of the *lutte à outrance*. Had he been in favor of it all along? Had his consent to negotiate been a pretence to enable him to gain two or three weeks' rest? Or had he really been desirous of peace?

The United States government took the view that the armistice and the subsequent negotiations were a mere sham, a part of a contemptible comedy, designed by the Mexicans as a means of strengthening their fortifications and recruiting their forces. But observers on the spot were of a different opinion.

"I must not omit to say," Trist reported, "in justice to Santa Anna, that I am perfectly convinced that no man was ever more sincere in anything than he was in his wish to make peace, or more firmly resolved than he was to go to all practicable lengths to effect the object. But the thing was an impossibility, upon the basis on which alone we would have it. He is no patriot—just the reverse; but had he been the purest of patriots, he could not have displayed more single-mindedness than he recently has, or striven with more energy and efficiency against the numberless difficulties of all sorts which whelmed him in."[2]

And a few weeks later Trist returned to the subject, asserting that up to the very afternoon of Sunday, the fifth of September, Santa Anna was resolved to accept the American terms of peace, but had been persuaded by Tornel to

[1] Santa Anna to Scott, Sept. 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 331.
[2] Trist to Buchanan, Sept. 27, 1847; *ibid.*, 303.

change his mind.[1] Trist, of course, was not an impartial witness, for he was defending his own cause and that of Scott; but the British minister concurred with him.

"I am of opinion," Bankhead reported to the Foreign Office, "that General Santa Anna was sincerely desirous of concluding a peace with the United States; but he was overruled on a late occasion by two persons who laboured for the sake of personal interests and ambition to overthrow the President's good intentions; the persons I allude to are General Tornel and Señor Pacheco.

"The former of these gentlemen may truly be called the evil genius of Mexico, for in every case where revolution is to be aided and pernicious advice given, without the risk of personal danger, General Tornel has been preeminent. It was he who advocated carrying on the war with the United States; it was his counsel which determined General Paredes to cross the Rio Bravo to attack General Taylor and all the misfortunes that have happened lately in this neighbourhood are to be set down to the same adviser. . . .

"Señor Pacheco, the late Minister for Foreign Affairs, instilled the same insane advice into the ears of the late President, and although a man of inferior talent to General Tornel, he was enabled to work upon the mind of General Santa Anna, when any uncertainty existed with the latter as to the expediency of General Tornel's advice."[2]

No one could ever be sure of what was in Santa Anna's mind at any given moment, but on the whole it seems likely that when he concluded the armistice, he had no settled policy in respect to peace. He desperately needed a few days' respite, and for that he would have paid any price. The appointment of commissioners to negotiate a treaty committed him to nothing, and was, therefore, cheap enough for what he was getting. When it came to the point of accepting or rejecting the American ultimatum, Santa Anna probably wavered and for some hours may have been inclined to yield. The effect of his acts upon his own personal fortunes must have been the one problem that perplexed his mind. If he should assent to a treaty of peace, could he continue at the head of the government? Or would the revolution which was certain to follow prove too

[1] Same to same, Dec. 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 349.
[2] Bankhead to Palmerston, Sept. 28, 1847, No. 87; *F. O. MSS.*

much for him? The answers to these questions must have seemed dubious; but ultimately, on the advice of Tornel, Pacheco, Rejón,[1] and others, he decided to continue the war. In other words, he concluded that he must certainly be turned out of office if he consented to a peace; and he therefore decided to accept the desperate chances of continued war. And the fact that Santa Anna was driven to staking his fortunes on the wild hope that victory might yet be won by the Mexican armies shows how dangerous and difficult the path of peace must then have appeared to the most experienced politician on the spot.

The news of the battles of Contreras and Churubusco and the following armistice reached Washington on Tuesday, the fourteenth of September. Next day the President, with Trist's despatch of August 29 before him, noted his fear that Scott had made a mistake and that "the armistice was agreed to by the Mexican commander only to gain time to reorganise his defeated army for further resistance," and the President added: "I shall wait very anxiously for further information from the army."[2] But seventeen days elapsed before any definite news reached the anxious officials at Washington, and then it came only in the shape of the little pamphlet published by the Mexican government, immediately after the armistice was terminated, which contained the official correspondence.[3] A copy had reached Vera Cruz and had been forwarded by the American officer in command of that town.

The President had for several days been ill of a remittent fever, but when the facts in relation to Trist's negotiations were laid before him he mustered strength enough to direct that Trist be recalled and to order that Scott should henceforward "levy contributions on the enemy, and make them

[1] See correspondence between Rejón and Santa Anna, printed in Semmes, 414–416.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, III, 172.

[3] *Contestaciones habidas entre el Supremo Gobierno Mexicano, el General-en-Gefe del Ejército Americano, y el Comisionado de los Estados Unidos.* Reprinted (with translation) in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 349–384.

as far as practicable defray the expenses of the war." His reasons he stated thus:

"Mexico has refused to treat for peace upon terms which the U. S. can accept; and it is now manifest that the war must be prosecuted with increased forces and increased energy. We must levy contributions and quarter on the enemy. This is part of the object of the letter to Gen'l Scott. Mr. Trist is recalled because his remaining longer with the army could not, probably, accomplish the objects of his mission, and because his remaining longer might, & probably would, impress the Mexican Government with the belief that the U. S. were so anxious for peace that they would ultimately conclude one upon the Mexican terms. Mexico must now sue for peace, & when she does we will hear her propositions."[1]

These were the conclusions reached after a three hours' cabinet discussion, at the close of which the President naturally found himself "much exhausted & fatigued."

The formal instructions to Scott and Trist both bore the date of Wednesday, October 6, 1847, the day after the cabinet meeting. In the despatch to Scott reference was made to unofficial reports of the operations of the army down to August 20 and since (no official despatches having been received of a date later than June 4), and a compliment was paid to Scott for the "signal victories obtained by you and the gallant army under your command." The terms of peace proposed by Mexico were characterized as "extravagant and inadmissible," and a copy of the instructions to Trist on this subject was enclosed.

"It is quite evident," continued the Secretary of War, "that the authorities of Mexico would not present and insist upon, as a basis for peace, terms which could not be entertained for a moment by us without national dishonor, were they not encouraged to continue the war by that portion of the population, as well as others, upon which the burdens of the war ought to fall, and upon which, in the further prosecution of it, they must be made to fall, as the only means now left of bringing it to a close."

For these reasons, guerilla warfare must be sternly suppressed; "the burden of sustaining our forces in Mexico"

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 186.

must be levied on the people of the country; the city of Mexico must be taken and held, and the road to Vera Cruz kept securely open; and as reinforcements arrived, the area occupied by Scott's army must be extended.

"Left as you are to your own judgment as to your military operations," the despatch continued, "the fullest confidence is entertained that you will conduct them in the most effective way to bring about the main and ultimate object of the war: namely, to induce the rulers and people of Mexico to desire and consent to such terms of peace as we have a right to ask and expect."[1]

The instructions to Trist were drawn on similar lines. The counter-project of the Mexican commissioners was described as a most extraordinary document, the extravagance of which conclusively proved that the Mexican government was insincere and that their only intention was to gain time.

"They must have known that the United States would never surrender either the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, or New Mexico, or any part of Upper California; never would indemnify Mexican citizens for injuries they may have sustained by our troops in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war; and never could, without dishonor, suffer the Mexican government to levy new duties on goods imported into ports now in our actual possession which had already paid duty to the United States."

Trist's original instructions, the Secretary of State continued, had been framed in the spirit of forbearance and moderation; for it had been hoped that after the fall of Vera Cruz the Mexican government would have been willing to treat for peace, as New Mexico, the Californias, several of the northern states, and most of the seaports, were then in the possession of the United States. But circumstances since the original instructions were written had entirely changed. A vast amount of treasure and "the lives of a great number of our most valuable citizens" had been expended. Nevertheless the President, desirous of showing great magnanimity, had left the terms unaltered, and—as now appeared—with most unsatisfactory results.

[1] Marcy to Scott, Oct. 6, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 138–140.

"After a series of brilliant victories, when our troops were at the gates of the capital, and it was completely in our power, the Mexican government have not only rejected your liberal offers, but have insulted our country by proposing terms the acceptance of which would degrade us in the eyes of the World, and be justly condemned by the whole American people. They must attribute our liberality to fear, or they must take courage from our supposed political divisions."

Buchanan also dwelt on the mode of conducting the war. Never, he asserted—and with some justice—had war been levied by invading forces in such a manner. Fair or even extravagant prices had been paid for supplies. Private property had been held sacred. Famishing Mexican soldiers had been fed and their wounds bound up. In return, American citizens had been murdered, and their bodies mutilated by bands of savage guerillas; and Mexican officers and soldiers alike had habitually violated their parole. "Those paroled at Vera Cruz have fought against us at Cerro Gordo; and those paroled at Cerro Gordo have doubtless been in the ranks of the enemy in the battles so glorious to our arms at and near the City of Mexico."

In conclusion it was stated that the President believed Trist's continued presence with the army was likely to do more harm than good, and he was therefore directed to return home by the first safe opportunity. No other offer to treat would be made to the Mexican government. They must first sue for peace.

"What terms the President may be willing to grant them will depend upon the future events of the war, and the amount of the precious blood of our fellow citizens and the treasure which shall in the mean time have been expended. Should the Mexican government desire hereafter to open negotiations, or to propose terms of peace, their overtures will be immediately transmitted to Washington by the commanding general, where they will receive the prompt consideration of the President."[1]

There can be no doubt that the President of the United States and his cabinet, at this stage of the game at least, were most sincerely anxious for peace. They were within

[1] Buchanan to Trist, Oct. 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 91.

two months of the meeting of a new Congress, in which the Whigs had a majority in the House, and which was by no means assuredly in favor of the administration in the Senate. A renewed and embittered discussion over the origin and causes of the war, with the inevitable accompaniment of fresh attacks upon the extension of slavery, was something the administration must have looked forward to with dismay. But anxious as they were, they obviously blundered in the methods they adopted for gaining their ends.

It should not have required any very great penetration, or any very wide knowledge of history, to see that the first requisite for peace—the first object which the United States must endeavor to attain after defeating the Mexican armies in the field—was the establishment and maintenance of some sort of recognized government which could act in the name and on behalf of Mexico. The result of too complete a victory might well be, and was indeed likely to be, the dissolution of the existing social order, and a condition closely resembling anarchy. The best that could be hoped for in the event of Santa Anna's disappearance would be the establishment of some other government of more or less revolutionary origin; because as long as the better part of the country was held in awe by American troops regular and generally recognized elections could not be held, except by agreement with the United States. But a revolutionary government, whether Santa Anna or another were at its head, was precisely the most difficult to deal with because of its inherent weakness. The strongest revolutionary ruler of the nineteenth century, Napoleon himself, dared not yield an inch of territory, even to a united Europe, after the terrific losses of the Russian campaign. Legitimate sovereigns, he declared, might venture to do so; but for him, a soldier who had forced his way to the throne, no such weakness was permissible. The day he ceased to be dreaded he must cease to rule.[1]

[1] *"Eh bien! qu'est-ce donc qu'on veut de moi? me dit brusquement Napoléon. Que je me déshonore? Jamais! Je saurai mourir, mais je ne céderai pas un pouce de terrain. Vos Souverains, nés sur le trône, peuvent se laisser battre vingt fois et rentrer toujours dans leurs capitales; moi, je ne le puis pas, parce que je suis*

In Mexico it was to be feared that these inevitable difficulties in the way of peace would be extraordinarily enhanced from the fact that mutiny had been for years the normal method of overturning unpopular administrations. Every act of every government in that unhappy country was necessarily conditioned by the fear of what the other revolutionary elements might attempt. It was always to be assumed that numbers of men were on the watch for any hopeful pretext to revolt. But a revolt, by its very nature, excluded deliberation or discussion of any kind—even newspaper discussion. A "cry" was all any opposition leader needed, and no better "cry" could be asked for than that which a proposal to dismember the national territory would afford.

Now what the American administration seemed to expect was that the Mexicans, after being utterly crushed, should themselves formulate and transmit to Washington such terms of peace as might be acceptable to the conquerors. Obviously, such an expectation was unreasonable. No conquered government, however powerful at home, could have ventured to propose the conditions of its own humiliation or do more than accept those dictated to it. The most that it could do would be to yield to demands which were backed by a demonstrably irresistible force. It could never be expected to formulate terms of surrender, and the weaker the government the less was to be expected of it.[1]

There were several courses open to the government of the United States. Thus it might perhaps have been well to

*un soldat parvenu. Ma domination ne survivra pas au jour où j'aurai cessé d'être fort, et, par conséquent, d'être craint."*—(*Mémoires de Metternich*, I, 148. Account of interview of June 26, 1813.) Much to the same effect were Napoleon's remarks to Schwartzenberg, the Austrian ambassador in Paris, on April 9, 1813.—(Rose, *The Life of Napoleon I*, II, 259.)

[1] The case of France in 1871 offers some striking analogies to that of Mexico in 1847. In both the country was invaded and the capital taken. In both there was for some time a doubt as to whether a sufficiently stable government could be established with which peace might be made. In both the conqueror demanded territorial concessions. But Bismarck never for a moment suggested that Thiers or the Government of National Defence should formulate the terms of peace. Those terms, he said, he would state himself whenever he was satisfied the French agents were ready and able to make a bargain.

replace Trist by a stronger man; but clearly it was useless to recall him and then to sit waiting until Mexico was ready to come to Washington with proposals for a treaty. Persistence in that policy could only have resulted in an enforced prolongation of the war, and the consequent occupation of all Mexico by the United States. And this is precisely what Scott and Trist, as well as many men at home, came to suspect was the real purpose of the American executive.

It was not, however, until the sixteenth of November that the instructions of October 6 from the State and War Departments reached their destination. These instructions—requiring the American troops thenceforward to live on the country, and ordering Trist to leave Mexico—were based, as has been seen, upon a somewhat imperfect knowledge of the condition of things which existed in Mexico at the time when the armistice ended—on the seventh, namely, of September. And during the seventy days which elapsed from the seventh of September to the middle of November events had occurred which affected most materially the situation of the contending nations.

## CHAPTER XLVII

### THE MOLINO DEL REY AND CHAPULTEPEC

The hill of Chapultepec, crowned with the imposing structure which commemorates two Spanish viceroys and an Austrian emperor of Mexico, is a narrow volcanic ridge of rock rising sharply a hundred and ninety-five feet above the level lands that lie between it and the city. It is distant, in a southwesterly direction, a trifle over three miles from the Government Palace and the great plaza of the capital; and it lies a little more than a mile northerly from the Archbishop's Palace of Tacubaya.

The ridge is six or seven hundred yards long at its base, and runs nearly east and west.[1] On the northerly side and easterly end the rock is precipitous, and on the south it is also extremely steep; but on the west—the end away from the city—it slopes down at such an angle that, although rough and rocky, it is practicable for infantry.

The summit of the rock has been levelled off so as to make a platform for the palace, begun in 1783 by the then viceroy, Matías de Galvez, and continued by his son and successor, the more famous Bernardo de Galvez.[2] The untimely death of the latter and the suspicions of the Spanish court put a stop to the work before it was entirely completed, and for years it remained neglected, until, in 1833, it was utilized as the military college of the republic.[3]

[1] Or more nearly E. N. E. and W. S. W.

[2] Bernardo de Galves was governor of Louisiana during the Revolution of the thirteen colonies. When Spain, in alliance with France, declared war on Great Britain, Galves was almost the only Spanish leader who did anything effectual. He captured the British posts on the lower Mississippi, as well as Mobile and Pensacola, thus saving the Floridas for Spain in the treaty of 1783. Had the Floridas remained British at that time they might very well have been British to-day.

[3] Dublan y Lozano, II, 603; decree of Nov. 16, 1833.

The palace, conforming to the general trend of the ridge, faces a little to the east of south. About it, on all sides, is a terrace of irregular shape and varying width, which is in part cut out of the rock and in part built up and supported by massive retaining walls. At the easterly end, where the rock was originally higher than elsewhere, a second and higher platform exists, formed by cutting off the summit of the hill at a level some fifteen or twenty feet above the principal terrace. At the time of the American invasion access to the palace was gained by a zigzag road or ramp cut along the southerly face of the rock. Starting at the foot of the ridge at the point nearest the city, the road mounted to the lower or principal terrace with one sharp turn about halfway up.

The less precipitous slopes of the hill of Chapultepec and a good deal of the land about its base were covered by a noble grove of venerable cypresses; and the hill and grove, together with some level open ground on the west, were enclosed to form a rude and neglected park, the forerunner of the beautiful pleasure-grounds which now delight the visitor to the city of Mexico. Around three sides of this enclosure there existed in 1847 high park walls, capable of offering a serious obstacle to infantry. From east to west the walls on each side ran nearly parallel to each other, and were about fifteen hundred yards, or over three-quarters of a mile, in length. At the eastern end the enclosure was irregular in shape, and narrowed down to about a hundred and fifty yards.

The western end of the enclosure was formed by a range of substantial stone buildings nearly a quarter of a mile long, which were collectively known as the Molino del Rey, or King's Mill. These buildings in the time of the Spaniards had been used, the southern end as a flour-mill, the northern end as a powder-mill; but at some later period a part of the buildings had been occupied by a cannon foundry.

Chapultepec, with its rock, its enclosure, and its solid building, constituted a military position which was evidently formidable by nature, and was reported to have been forti-

fied and to be strongly held; and many of the American officers were of opinion that upon the renewal of hostilities the first object should be the capture of this post. But when the armistice came to an end Scott had no plan of action ready. From the morning of August 21, when he first received Santa Anna's verbal request for a suspension of hostilities, down to September 6, when Scott sent notice that he would terminate the truce, more than sixteen days and nights had elapsed, and no preparation whatever had been made for the contingency of renewed hostilities.

"This evening," wrote Colonel Hitchcock in his diary of September 6, "the General called some of us together, including Capt. Robert E. Lee (engineer), to consider the best mode of threatening and attacking the city,—to determine the depot for the sick, wounded, supplies, etc."[1]

It was high time. From Tacubaya on the north to San Agustin on the south, Scott's army, now reduced to much less than ten thousand effective men, was extended in a line fully eleven miles long; and an enterprising enemy could hardly have found much difficulty in defeating these distant divisions in detail. Scott, however, continued to repose confidence in the Mexican lack of initiative, and for five days longer he did not concentrate his forces.

"Being delayed," he reported, "by the terms of the armistice more than two weeks, *we had now, late on the 7th, to begin to reconnoitre the different approaches to the city, within our reach, before I could lay down any definitive plan of attack.*"[2]

But before these reconnoissances were begun Scott's attention was called to the Molino del Rey by a rumor that reached him, probably through Trist, that a cannon-foundry was in active operation in the old buildings. What was the origin of this rumor never appeared, but Scott, without further inquiry, unhesitatingly accepted it as true.

On the morning of Tuesday, the seventh of September,

[1] Hitchcock, 293.

[2] Scott to Marcy, Sept. 11, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 355. Italics are not in the original.

a movement of large bodies of Mexican troops north of the Chapultepec enclosure was plainly visible from the roof of the Archbishop's Palace. Worth, who observed the movement with Scott, was of opinion that the intention of the Mexican commander was to bring on a general engagement, and advised an immediate attack, before the Mexican preparations were complete. Scott thought differently. The enemy's movement, he told Worth, was defensive merely, and intended to protect the very valuable cannon-foundry at the Molino del Rey. "Having heard," as he said in his official report, "that many church bells had been sent to be cast into guns, the enemy's movement was easily understood," and he therefore ordered Worth to make an attack on the mill with his whole division that night, to take the buildings, destroy the machinery, spike the guns, and return to camp the next morning.[1]

The ground had not yet been examined thoroughly, and Worth thought it wise to make a reconnoissance before the time came for complying with the order. The result may best be stated in his own words:

"A close and daring reconnaissance, by Captain Mason of the engineers, made on the morning of the 7th, represented the enemy's lines collateral to Chapultepec to be as follows: His left rested upon and occupied a group of strong stone buildings, called El Molino del Rey, adjoining the grove at the foot of the hill of Chapultepec, and directly under the guns of the castle which crowns its summit. The right of his line rested upon another stone building, called Casa Mata, situated at the foot of the ridge that slopes gradually from the heights above the village of Tacubaya to the plain below. Midway between these buildings was the enemy's field battery, and his infantry forces were disposed on either side of it. This reconnoissance was verified by Captain Mason and Colonel Duncan, on the afternoon of the same day. The result indicated that the centre was the weak point of the enemy's position; and that his flanks were the strong points, his left flank being the stronger."[2]

The small and inconspicuous building known as the Casa Mata, used as a powder-magazine, was so situated in a fold

[1] Semmes, 431.
[2] Worth's Report, Sept. 10, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 362.

of the hills as to escape accurate observation from the south. To the American engineers it appeared a square stone building protected by "an ordinary field entrenchment." In fact, it was "a strong stone citadel, surrounded with bastioned entrenchments and impassable ditches—an old Spanish work, recently repaired and enlarged."[1] It lay about five hundred yards due west from the northerly end of the Molino del Rey, so that the Mexican line, taking the latter building into account, formed two sides of a right-angled triangle, one side running east and west from the Casa Mata to the Molino del Rey, about five hundred yards; the other side, formed by the Molino del Rey itself, running nearly north and south, and being about four hundred yards long. The hypothenuse of the triangle roughly represented the position which the American troops must occupy, and from which they must attack an enemy posted on a re-entering angle.

Worth believed the task set for him was too hard for his unaided division, and he asked Scott for reinforcements. He was accordingly given the whole of Cadwalader's brigade of Pillow's division, three pieces of field artillery under Captain Drum, two heavy siege guns (twenty-four-pounders) under Captain Huger, and a force of cavalry under Major E. V. Sumner, which numbered (officers and men) about three hundred. Scott also assented to Worth's suggestion that the attack should be postponed till daylight the next morning; but he was not willing to accede to Worth's further suggestion that after the Molino del Rey was taken, an assault should be attempted on Chapultepec.

"For this difficult operation," he reported to the War Department four days later, "we were not entirely ready, and moreover we might altogether neglect the castle if, as we then hoped, our reconnoissances should prove that the distant southern approaches to the city were more eligible than this southwestern approach."[2]

Worth accordingly made his dispositions during the night of the seventh of September. By three o'clock in the morn-

[1] *Ibid.*, 364. [2] Scott's Report; *ibid.*, 355.

ing of Wednesday, the eighth, the several columns of troops were in motion, "and when the gray of the morning enabled them to be seen, they were as accurately in position as if posted in midday for review."[1] The ground they occupied was barren and uncultivated, forming, in fact, the northerly end of the hill back of Tacubaya on which stood the Archbishop's Palace. This hill sloped down very gradually on the northeast toward Chapultepec, and on the north toward the Casa Mata. On the west of the ground occupied by Worth's command, a barranca or ravine, which was deep but not impassable, formed an obstacle to the movement of cavalry or artillery. Almost the whole field of battle was within distant range of the guns mounted on the terraces of the palace of Chapultepec.

Worth, being satisfied that the Mexican centre was the weak point, had organized an assaulting party of five hundred picked men and officers made up from the various organizations of his own division—an arrangement which was subsequently the subject of grave criticism. This assaulting party was posted near the centre of the American line. Just to the right of them were Captain Huger's two siege guns, which were supported by a light battalion of Worth's regulars under Captain E. Kirby Smith, and General Cadwalader's brigade was held in reserve, a little to the rear. Garland's brigade (or so much of it as was left after providing its quota of the detachments above mentioned) was posted on the right, together with Captain Drum's small battery, while on the left was the remaining part of Clarke's brigade (temporarily under command of Colonel McIntosh), with Duncan's field battery of six guns, which was regularly attached to Worth's division. On the extreme left, watching the barranca, was Major Sumner's cavalry.

The Molino del Rey had been occupied by the Mexican troops late on the afternoon of Monday, the sixth of September; the garrison then consisting of General Leon's brigade of four battalions of national guards—probably men of relatively pure Spanish descent. On Tuesday morning

[1] Worth's Report; *ibid.*, 363.

Rangel's brigade, also of four battalions of miscellaneous infantry—including the grenadiers of the guard—was sent to reinforce Leon. In addition, two regular battalions were stationed in the Casa Mata under General Pérez; and the centre was held by General Simeon Ramírez with six regular battalions and a light battery. These battalions, whose arrival had been observed from Tacubaya by Scott and Worth on Tuesday morning, were protected either by the buildings in which they were posted or by maguey hedges and light intrenchments.

Besides the forces above mentioned, the cavalry division under General Alvarez, four thousand strong, was stationed at the hacienda of Morales about a mile west of the Casa Mata. Santa Anna asserts that on Tuesday evening he gave orders to Alvarez to advance to a point "a little more than a cannon-shot from the Casa Mata" (which he personally pointed out) and to fall on the flank and rear of the American troops the moment an attack on the Mexican position was begun.[1]

Such were Santa Anna's first dispositions, but on Tuesday night, with his usual restlessness, he decided to make important changes. He had received reports to the effect that an American attack on the extreme southeastern part of the city was imminent, and without stopping to verify these rumors he ordered Rangel's brigade back to the city, but with instructions to return to Chapultepec at daylight. One of the battalions of the five under General Ramírez was also ordered to fall back to a point between Chapultepec and the city.[2] Thus five battalions of infantry, out of sixteen in all, were withdrawn that night. Meanwhile, the remainder of the troops in the Mexican centre seem to have been moved toward their left and posted in front of the Molino del Rey, so that the Casa Mata remained entirely isolated.

At four o'clock the next morning, before dawn, Santa Anna received further reports confirming the rumor that the

[1] Santa Anna's Report of Nov. 12, 1847; *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 108, from which the foregoing statements as to the Mexican forces are taken.
[2] *Ibid.*, 109.

American attack was to be delivered on the southeastern part of the city, and he at once sent orders for the five battalions to join him at what he regarded as the threatened spot. When he himself arrived there everything was quiet, and the five battalions were directed to return to the Molino del Rey. They duly set out for their posts, but both they and Santa Anna arrived after the battle was over.

Early on Wednesday morning, as soon as the swift tropical dawn enabled the American gunners to see their mark, Captain Huger's two twenty-four-pounders opened on the Molino del Rey. Almost at the same moment the assaulting party began to move forward. Only about ten rounds had been fired from each of the two guns when the assaulting party had reached the front of the buildings of the Molino del Rey, and, moving swiftly and steadily on, they drove back the Mexican troops in the field and captured their guns under a heavy fire from the troops directly assailed, as well as from those posted in the buildings. Under this heavy and concentrated fire, the American advance was presently checked; the men began falling back; the captured guns were abandoned; and Smith's light battalion with half of Cadwalader's brigade were sent forward to their support. As Cadwalader advanced, and the small assaulting column retreated, leaving their dead and severely wounded on the ground, a Mexican battalion from Chapultepec sallied out to reoccupy the ground, and murdered all but two of the American wounded.[1]

But just before this repulse of the American assaulting column Garland's brigade on the right had begun an attack on the south end of Molino del Rey itself. Thus with the reinforcements sent forward to sustain the centre, and the advance of Garland, the whole of the American right and centre and half of the reserve were engaged in a desperate struggle; and for a time, which nobody attempted to esti-

[1] "Our soldiers with great enthusiasm left the recovered artillery in the midst of the slopes and pushed forward making a frightful havoc of the assailants (*haciendo un estrago horroroso en los asaltantes*) and came actually to within musket shot of the enemy's line of battle."—(*Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 205.)

mate, a doubtful battle was waged—the Mexicans vigorously defending the buildings, and the Americans gradually pushing forward up to the very walls and endeavoring to break down the gates and doors. At length the southernmost gate was dashed in by Garland's infantry, and the assailants poured into the yard.[1] At almost the same moment the northwestern gate was forced and in a few minutes the buildings were taken; the Mexicans retreating toward Chapultepec, with the exception of nearly seven hundred men, whose retreat was cut off and who surrendered within the buildings.

Meanwhile the left wing of Worth's force had been heavily engaged in what was in fact an independent action. The American officers had all failed to perceive the really formidable character of the works of the Casa Mata, and Worth had confidently ordered an advance against it as soon as the attack had fairly begun on the right. After a brief cannonade from Duncan's battery, an assault was attempted which carried Clarke's brigade up to the very slope of the parapet; but the Mexican fire was too severe, and the brigade fell back in disorder upon Duncan's battery which had been engaged, while the assault on the Casa Mata was in progress, in a contest with the Mexican cavalry.

When Clarke's brigade advanced in front of the position of Duncan's guns, the latter's fire on the Casa Mata had necessarily ceased. But just at this moment the gunners caught sight of the cavalry division of Alvarez advancing toward the ravine. Accompanied by a part of Cadwalader's brigade, which had been sent to its support when the assault on the Casa Mata was ordered, the battery was rushed to the extreme left of the American line, near the edge of the barranca, and as Alvarez came within canister range Duncan "opened a most effective fire, which soon broke the squadrons and drove them back in disorder." At the same time Sumner, with his three hundred horsemen, managed to cross

[1] Lieutenant U. S. Grant was among the first to enter the yard. A vivid account of this part of the contest will be found in Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, I, 152.

the ravine near its mouth, but with some loss, as his command was exposed to a severe fire from the Casa Mata. But once across, this small command boldly held its position, threatening Alvarez, who, without making any further effort, fell back to the distant hacienda he had at first occupied.

This cavalry interlude was just over when the remnants of Clarke's broken brigade fell back to the security of Duncan's battery, which at once opened fire for a second time on the Casa Mata. But by this time the Molino del Rey was taken, the Mexicans who had defended it were in flight, and the Casa Mata was in its turn abandoned, General Pérez and his men retreating northwesterly across the fields. The Americans were unequal to attempting any pursuit, though an artillery fire was kept up on the retreating Mexicans as long as they remained within range.

Hardly was the action thus ended when reinforcements on both sides began arriving in the neighborhood. Santa Anna, with the five battalions he had withdrawn the night before, had come up on the road skirting the northerly wall of the Chapultepec enclosure, where he met the stream of fugitives from the Molino del Rey. Here he halted, endeavoring to collect and reorganize the battalions which had been engaged.

On the American side, Pillow, on his own responsibility, had marched with Pierce's brigade for the scene of action as soon as it was perceived that the anticipated skirmish had developed into a battle. On his way he was met by orders from Scott directing him to come to Worth's assistance, but he arrived too late to take any part in the battle.

Both Worth and Cadwalader, it was reported, had again begged Scott to be allowed to pursue, and to attempt the capture of Chapultepec; but permission being refused, all that was now left for the American forces to do was to collect their dead and wounded and to destroy the foundry which had been Scott's sole object in ordering the attack.[1] But here a surprise awaited Scott and his staff.

[1] General Grant, writing nearly forty years afterward, says: "Had this victory been followed up promptly, no doubt Americans and Mexicans would

"Our principal object of assault," Colonel Hitchcock noted in his diary immediately after the battle, "was a building supposed to be a foundry. Strange to say, our information turned out to be false. The building was captured but no foundry was discovered. It seems it had been a foundry, but is no longer in use."[1]

Nothing remained, therefore, but to do such damage as was possible to the building, to remove the captured Mexican guns and some ammunition, and to blow up the powder-magazine situated in the Casa Mata. By noon the American troops were back in their former quarters, and in the afternoon Santa Anna ventured to the scene of the battle, although at nightfall his troops were again withdrawn. "At about three o'clock in the afternoon," he related, "I succeeded in causing the enemy to fall back on Tacubaya, the field remaining in possession of our troops"; and on the strength of this he proclaimed a Mexican victory.[2]

The American troops engaged, including both officers and men, numbered 3,447, and the casualties were 116 killed, 653 wounded, and 18 missing, or 787 in all, being nearly 23 per cent of the force engaged. The heaviest loss was in the regiments that took part in the assault on the Casa Mata, the fifth regular infantry in particular losing more than 38 per cent of its numbers. It is to be observed that the losses on the American side in this brief struggle were greater than those suffered in the two days of Buena Vista or in any other battle of the war.

On the Mexican side the statistics are involved in the

have gone over the defences of Chapultepec so near together that the place would have fallen into our hands without further loss." He admits that this result could not have been foreseen, but he adds that it is "always in order to follow a retreating foe."—(Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, I, 152.)

[1] Hitchcock, 296. It came to be believed in the American army that the foundry story had been treacherously spread by Santa Anna in order to induce Scott to attack a position considered by the Mexicans to be impregnable.

[2] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 111. The official reports of Scott and Worth, with subreports, are in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 354–375. Santa Anna's brief report, with a report from Alvarez of the cavalry operations, are in *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 108–111, 125–131. Accounts by other eye-witnesses will be found in Semmes, 431–447, and Anderson, 311–313; and see also Ros Bárcena, 424–453; Ripley, II, 357–385; Wilcox, 429–442; Stevens, 84–98; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 299–301.

customary doubt. The most careful of the Mexican historians, gathering his information from various sources and personal recollection, estimates the infantry force engaged at 4,000 rank and file; besides the cavalry division of Alvarez, which he estimates at 3,000 men, although Santa Anna stated it at 4,000.[1] In addition, the artillery posted at the palace of Chapultepec took a part in the combat, though distant and ineffectual. Worth reported that the Mexicans were commanded by Santa Anna in person and that their numbers exceeded 14,000; and his estimate of the Mexican strength seems to have been generally concurred in by the American officers present, who based their judgment on personal observation, on the extent of the lines occupied, and on the severity of the fire. No doubt Worth's figures were much exaggerated; but it also seems probable that the Mexican estimate of 4,000 infantry is too low. Taking everything into account, it it is likely that their total force present on the field, including the cavalry, may have amounted to 9,000 or 10,000, or considerably more than double Worth's numbers.

As for the Mexican losses, it is hard to form even a plausible conjecture as to their killed and wounded, though the total must have been considerable.[2] The prisoners taken numbered 685, including 53 commissioned officers,[3] and it would appear that the desertions from the scattered forces were exceedingly numerous. It is, perhaps, not far from the truth to say that the Mexicans on this day lost from all causes, including desertion, one-half of the infantry actually engaged. The losses in their cavalry must have been trifling.

The leaders on both sides were the subject of severe criticism. Santa Anna, in his usual fashion, endeavored to make a scape-goat of Alvarez, whom he accused of incapacity and cowardice in failing to charge the American left while it

[1] Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 427. This author, it is to be noted, asserts that Santa Anna withdrew many more men than he was willing to admit during the night of September 7.

[2] *"No hallo dato alguno digno de fé."*—(Roa Bárcena, 445.)

[3] Inspector-General's Report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 430.

was attacking the Casa Mata. But in truth the Mexican cavalry was worthless. At Palo Alto, at Monterey, and at Buena Vista, as well as during Scott's march from Puebla to Ayotla and his march from Ayotla to San Agustin, they had never shown the slightest dash or enterprise; and their conduct on the day of the Molino del Rey was no worse than it had been throughout the whole war.

Santa Anna himself was criticised for weakening the centre of his line on the night before Worth's attack, and for not leaving any subordinate in general command of the position. Pérez in the Casa Mata, Ramírez in the centre, Leon in the Molino del Rey, and Alvarez on the extreme right, all held independent commands, and, in Santa Anna's absence, had no common superior. Of the American generals, Worth was blamed for the bloody assault on the Casa Mata without a sufficient preparation by artillery fire; and indeed that attack seems to have been needless in view both of Worth's instructions and his plan of piercing the Mexican centre. If Clarke's brigade had been simply used to contain the Mexican right, their mere presence would have prevented the infantry in the Casa Mata from reinforcing the Mexican left; and when the centre was pierced, and the Molino del Rey was taken, the Casa Mata would undoubtedly have been abandoned or shelled into surrender with little loss.

As to Scott, it is plain that he blundered badly in ordering the attack. "He had originated it in error and caused it to be fought with inadequate forces, for an object which had no existence."[1] Even more truly than of Churubusco, it might be said of the combat of September 8 that a few more such victories would be the destruction of his army. If he gained prestige and thus demoralized his enemy, it is certain that he gained nothing else.

The affair of Molino del Rey being concluded, Scott was able to turn his whole attention to reconnoissances of the city and to the development of a plan of attack. The ques-

[1] Semmes, 444.

tion to be decided was whether Chapultepec should first be taken, or whether Chapultepec might be left to take care of itself while an attempt was made to carry the works on the south side of the city. Upon this point opinions in the American army were much divided.

On the south side there were two causeways across the marshes, each running due north, and each entering at *garitas*, or gates, some distance from the built-up portion of the city. The easternmost of these two roads was the Acapulco highway, coming in the city from San Agustin, through the ranch of San Antonio and over the bridge of Churubusco, to the gate of San Antonio Abad. The westernmost was the road running from Contreras through San Angel to the Niño Perdido gate. A cross-road from Tacubaya, running easterly through the little village of Piedad, crossed both the Niño Perdido and San Antonio roads. From Piedad itself a third road also ran due north to the gate of Belén at the southwesterly corner of the city, where it met a causeway running directly from Chapultepec. Near the Belén gate was the old Spanish citadel, a square work of no great strength, with small bastions at each corner, surrounding an arsenal and barracks. It mounted in all fifteen guns.

North of the Belén gate, and near the northwesterly part of the city, was the gate of San Cosmé, reached by a road known as the Calzada de San Cosmé which ran nearly east and west. It was the causeway along which Cortés retreated upon the *noche triste*. About a thousand yards—a little more than half a mile—from this gate, the San Cosmé road was joined by a road running northerly from Tacubaya past Chapultepec, known as the Calzada de la Verónica. It was generally agreed that it would be impossible to attack the gates of Belén or San Cosmé unless Chapultepec were first taken.

The city of Mexico was in no sense a fortified place. There were no walls about it. The so-called gates were mere stations intended to be occupied by detachments of police or revenue officers; but as they were generally solid stone

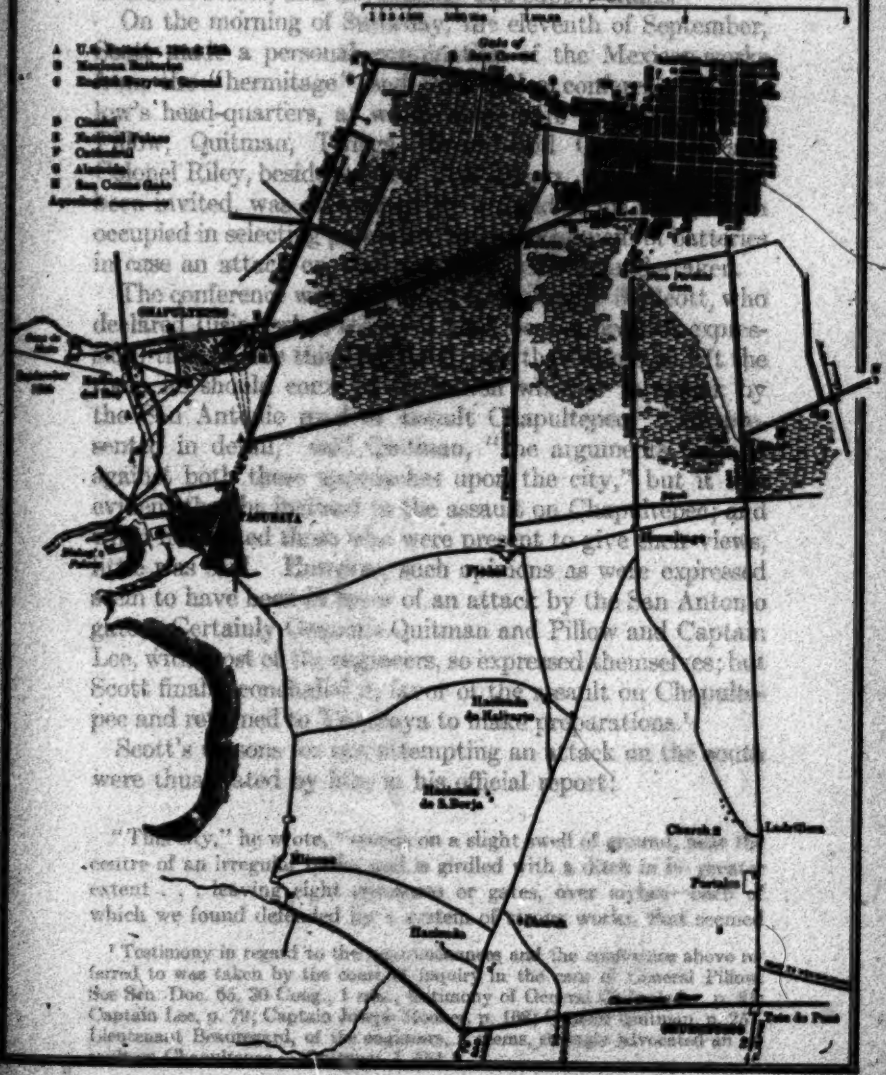
buildings they could be made to serve for purposes of defence; and at most of them barricades and earthworks, mounting only a few light guns, had been hastily constructed. But the strength of these posts lay chiefly in the fact that they could only be approached in front by perfectly straight causeways running through marshy fields and flanked by broad ditches.

Early on the morning of Thursday, the ninth of September, there appeared to be some activity on the Mexican side, and Riley's brigade of Twiggs's division was sent, in consequence, to occupy the village of Piedad; and soon afterward the whole of Pillow's division was sent to join Riley, while a party of infantry was sent easterly along the cross-road to seize an adobe house—said to be a ruined hermitage—which stood at the angle of that road and the road leading north to the Niño Perdido gate. The house had been occupied the night before by an advanced picket of the Mexicans. From this post, which afforded a clear view of the city across the marshes, reconnoissances, begun on the seventh and eighth, were continued on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of September.

While the Americans were thus busy in examining their enemy's position, the Mexicans were seen to be throwing up a long line of intrenchments from the garita of the Niño Perdido to that of San Antonio, and in putting several pieces of artillery in position. On the Saturday evening there were at least eleven guns in position in these batteries, and, the neighboring Viga canal having been cut, many of the low-lying fields were flooded—the ditches, of course, being everywhere brimful.

Scott, however, was not even yet ready to attack, and his orders to Pillow, who was in command at the village of Piedad, were to watch the enemy's movements, but to attempt nothing offensive. Pillow, however, caused the American picket at the "hermitage" to be reinforced by both infantry and artillery, and the road from thence to the garita of the Niño Perdido to be repaired. At the same time Scott ordered up Quitman's division from San Agustin to Coyoacan,

CHAPULTEPEC AND THE GATES OF MEXICO



and a general depot was established at Tacubaya, to which were removed the sick and wounded, [illegible] and ordnance stores, and the [illegible] and supplies.

On the morning of Saturday, the eleventh of September, a personal [illegible] of the Mexican hermitage [illegible] commander's head-quarters, [illegible] Quitman, [illegible] Colonel Riley, beside [illegible] invited [illegible] occupied in selecting [illegible] in case an attack [illegible]

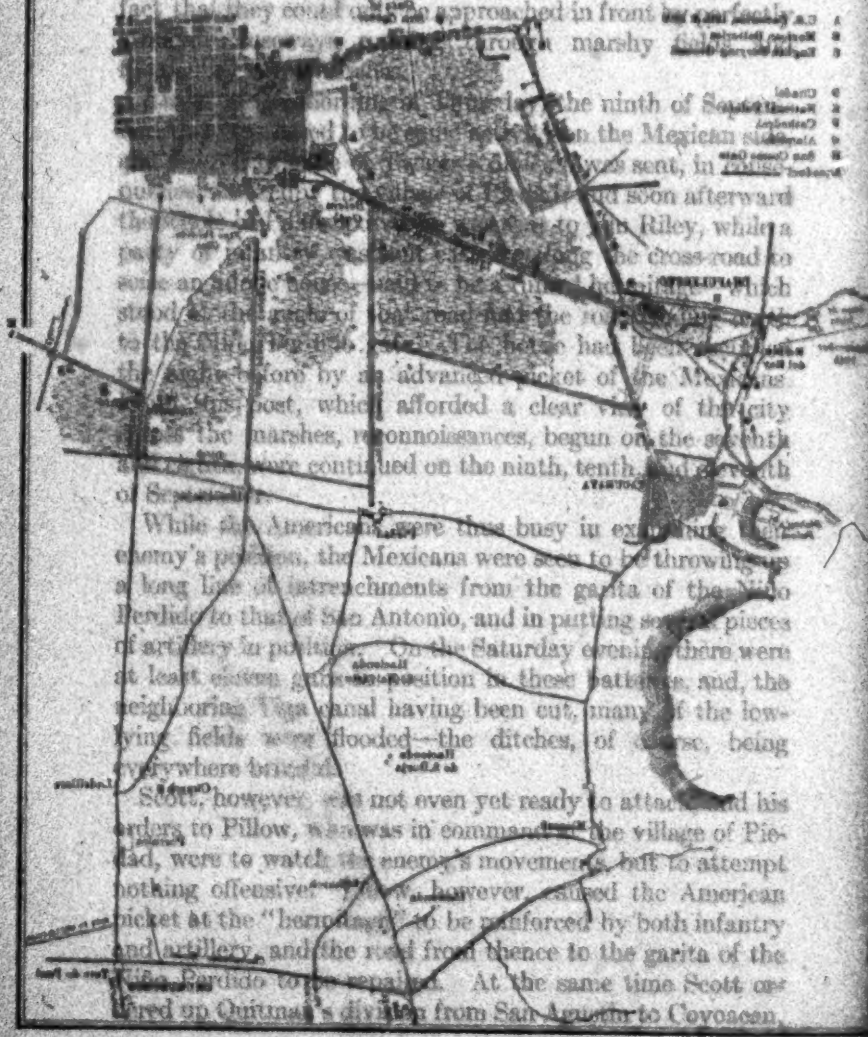
The conference [illegible] Quitman, who declared [illegible] assault Chapultepec [illegible] sented in detail [illegible] Quitman, "the arguments [illegible] both these [illegible] upon the city," but it [illegible] ed to the assault on Chapultepec, and [illegible] were present to give their views, [illegible] such opinions as were expressed [illegible] seem to have [illegible] of an attack by the San Antonio [illegible] Certainly [illegible] Quitman and Pillow and Captain Lee, who [illegible] of the engineers, so expressed themselves; but Scott finally [illegible] assault on Chapultepec and resolved to [illegible] days to make preparations.[1]

Scott's [illegible] attempting an attack on the south were thus [illegible] by him in his official report:

"The city," he wrote, "stands on a slight swell of ground, [illegible] centre of an irregular [illegible] is girdled with a [illegible] extent [illegible] eight [illegible] or gates, over [illegible] which we found [illegible] by a [illegible] works. That [illegible]

[1] Testimony in regard to the [illegible] and the conference above referred to was taken by the committee [illegible] See Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., testimony of General [illegible] Captain Lee, p. 70; Captain [illegible] Lieutenant Beauregard, of the engineers, [illegible]

made to serve for purposes of defence, of them barricades and earthworks, mounting a few light guns, had been hastily constructed. But the strength of these posts lay chiefly in the fact that they could only be approached in front by carefully [illegible] through marshy fields [illegible]



[illegible] the ninth of September [illegible] on the Mexican side [illegible] were sent, in [illegible] and soon afterward [illegible] to join Riley, while a party of [illegible] the cross-road to some [illegible] houses, [illegible] which stood at the [illegible] road near the [illegible] to the Niño Perdido. [illegible] had been [illegible] the night before by an advanced picket of the Mexicans [illegible] post, which afforded a clear view of the city [illegible] the marshes, reconnoissances, begun on the seventh [illegible] were continued on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of September.

While the Americans were thus busy in examining the enemy's position, the Mexicans were seen to be throwing up a long line of intrenchments from the garita of the Niño Perdido to that of San Antonio, and in putting several pieces of artillery in position. On the Saturday evening there were at least sixteen guns in position in these batteries, and, the neighboring Viga canal having been cut, many of the low-lying fields were flooded—the ditches, of course, being everywhere breached.

Scott, however, was not even yet ready to attack. His orders to Pillow, who was in command at the village of Piedad, were to watch the enemy's movements, but to attempt nothing offensive. Pillow, however, caused the American picket at the "hornabeque" to be reinforced by both infantry and artillery, and the road from thence to the garita of the Niño Perdido to be repaired. At the same time Scott ordered Quitman's division from San Agustin to Coyoacan,

and a general depot was established at Mixcoac, to which were removed the sick and wounded, the spare ordnance and ordnance stores, and the baggage and supply trains.

On the morning of Saturday, the eleventh of September, Scott made a personal examination of the Mexican works from the "hermitage" and then had a conference at Pillow's head-quarters, at which there were present Generals Pillow, Quitman, Twiggs, Pierce, and Cadwalader and Colonel Riley, besides several staff-officers. Worth, who had been invited, was excused on the ground of his being much occupied in selecting points for the establishment of batteries in case an attack on Chapultepec should be undertaken.

The conference was principally a monologue by Scott, who declared (using what seems to have been a favorite expression) that he was thinking aloud, and that before he left the room he should come to a decision whether to attack by the San Antonio road or assault Chapultepec. "He presented in detail," said Quitman, "the arguments for and against both these approaches upon the city," but it was evident that he inclined to the assault on Chapultepec; and when he invited those who were present to give their views, little was said. However, such opinions as were expressed seem to have been in favor of an attack by the San Antonio gate. Certainly Generals Quitman and Pillow and Captain Lee, with most of the engineers, so expressed themselves; but Scott finally concluded in favor of the assault on Chapultepec and returned to Tacubaya to make preparations.[1]

Scott's reasons for not attempting an attack on the south were thus stated by him in his official report:

"This city," he wrote, "stands on a slight swell of ground, near the centre of an irregular basin, and is girdled with a ditch in its greater extent . . . leaving eight entrances or gates, over arches—each of which we found defended by a system of strong works, that seemed

[1] Testimony in regard to the reconnoissances and the conference above referred to was taken by the court of inquiry in the case of General Pillow. See Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., testimony of General Cadwalader, p. 81; Captain Lee, p. 79; Captain Joseph Hooker, p. 168; General Quitman, p. 257. Lieutenant Beauregard, of the engineers, it seems, strongly advocated an assault on Chapultepec.—(Quitman, I, 354.)

to require nothing but some men and guns to be impregnable. Outside and within the cross-fires of those gates, we found to the south obstacles but little less formidable. All the approaches near the city are over elevated causeways, cut in many places (to oppose us) and flanked on both sides by ditches, also of unusual dimensions. The numerous cross-roads are flanked in like manner, having bridges at the intersections, recently broken. The meadows thus checkered, are, moreover, in many spots, under water or marshy. . . .

"After a close personal survey of the southern gates, covered by Pillow's division and Riley's brigade of Twiggs's—with four times our numbers concentrated in our immediate front—I determined, on the 11th, to avoid that net-work of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion to the southwest and west, less unfavorable approaches.

"To economise the lives of our gallant officers and men, as well as to insure success, it became indispensable that this resolution should be long masked from the enemy; and again, that the new movement, when discovered, should be mistaken for a feint, and the old as indicating our true and ultimate point of attack."[1]

Scott's plan, therefore, contemplated a feigned attack by Twiggs's division on the garita of San Antonio, a prolonged cannonade of the palace of Chapultepec, and an assault by Quitman's and Pillow's divisions, with Worth in support. Whether he had made any plan for the movements of the army after they had taken Chapultepec is not clear. Pillow asked him that direct question, but seems to have got no answer; although Scott is reported to have said in the same conversation that he had reason to believe he would be met by a white flag on taking the palace.[2]

However, in accordance with the plan above outlined, two heavy batteries were constructed on the night of Saturday, the eleventh of September—the first on the road leading from Tacubaya past Chapultepec to the San Cosmé road, the second on the road leading from Tacubaya to Molino del Rey. The first of these was distant about a thousand yards from the southern face of the palace, the second about fifteen hundred yards from the southwesterly angle—which were long ranges for the artillery of that day.

[1] Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 376.
[2] Testimony of Cadwalader and Hooker; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81, 169.

Quitman was ordered to march with his whole division by daylight on Saturday to join Pillow at Piedad, where more than half of Scott's army was now assembled. But late at night all the troops (except Twiggs's division) were put in motion. Pillow's division marched to the battle-field of Molino del Rey with orders to seize the buildings at dawn on Sunday, while Quitman was ordered to take position near the southerly wall of the Chapultepec enclosure and support the batteries that had been erected during the night. By three o'clock on Sunday morning Pillow was in position and seized the mill as directed, and at the same time occupied the Casa Mata. A third battery was then established, close to the Molino del Rey and at a distance of about eleven hundred yards from the westerly end of the palace of Chapultepec. This last battery was not completed until the afternoon; but the two batteries first constructed opened early in the morning, and the bombardment was kept up all day, inflicting some damage to the palace, but much more to the *morale* of its defenders.

The palace, as has been seen, was not in any proper sense a "castle," or a "fortress," as the American reports called it, but a large and solidly built dwelling whose commanding position on the summit of a ridge afforded excellent opportunities for a vigorous defence; while some improvised works in and near it, mounted with a few pieces of light artillery, had given it a certain degree of added strength.

The post was commanded at this time by the veteran General Bravo, whose experience in warfare, and particularly in the revolutionary struggles of thirty years before, had been rather those of a guerilla chief than a commander of regular troops. According to his own reports, his force was so diminished by desertion that on Sunday evening there remained under his command only 832 men, being one battalion of infantry of the line and various detachments of national guards, chiefly the remains of those who had garrisoned the Molino del Rey on the previous Wednesday. Of these, 367 were posted in the grove and other points within the enclosure, and the rest within the palace itself. There

must also be added the students of the Military College, whom Bravo did not include; and in addition there were large forces in the neighborhood, but outside the enclosure, who were not under his command.

Within the enclosure and at its western end the ground near the Molino del Rey was a level, open, cultivated field with a ditch at the end of the field toward the palace. Some slight intrenchments had been constructed along or near the ditch. Beyond these began the cypress grove, the ground continuing level and very marshy for another five hundred yards, when the rocky ascent began. On this western slope, not quite half-way up, was a small redan, a breastwork for infantry only, in the rear of which the ground had been mined. At the foot of the western parapet of the terrace of the palace was a ditch about twelve feet wide and ten deep.

At the palace itself thirteen pieces of artillery of various calibres had been mounted on the terraces, two of which were in a projection on the northern side, giving a flank fire toward the Molino del Rey and along the road north of the enclosure; while the remaining guns commanded the western and southern approaches, which alone were practicable for an assaulting party. The palace buildings had been strengthened by hastily constructed splinter-proofs of timber and sand-bags, and the roof was protected in like manner. The roadway leading to the palace on the south front had been strengthened by an earthen parapet on its outer side all the way up; and at the angle of the zigzag, where the road turned, a four-pounder gun had been placed and a breastwork for infantry had been constructed.

Outside of the enclosure, near its southeastern angle, strong barricades had been built across the Tacubaya road, and in their rear and in the field to the west was a lunette with wet ditches. The barricades and lunette together mounted three guns, which commanded the road and the fields on either side of it. In the rear of these works, the park walls of the enclosure had been furnished with scaffolding along the inner side, so as to form a banquette for infantry.

During Sunday, while the bombardment of Chapultepec was going on, both Generals Quitman and Pillow had opportunities to reconnoitre the ground in their front over which the assault was to be made; but apart from their reconnoissances no effort was made on that day to push forward the American infantry. The Mexicans, meanwhile, were busy bringing up reinforcements from the city. Early that morning Santa Anna had been informed that the greater part of Scott's troops had been collected near Tacubaya, and he accordingly ordered all the available Mexican forces into that neighborhood, leaving, as he stated, strong reserves near the San Antonio gate. These available forces consisted principally of the brigades of Rangel and Ramírez (now under General Peña y Barragan), which as yet had taken little active part in the battles near the capital.

During the day Bravo repeatedly called for reinforcements, and Santa Anna sent the battalion of San Blas, under Colonel Xicotencatl, whose name suggests Tlascalan descent;[1] but toward nightfall this battalion was withdrawn from the grove in which it had been posted, and Santa Anna after dark verbally directed Bravo to withdraw all his troops to the palace itself. Bravo, however, remonstrated against this step, and finally convinced Santa Anna that the grove ought to be firmly held; and the latter promised to send a battalion that night, with other reinforcements at the opportune moment. He explained that he was unwilling to send more men at that time, as it was an unnecessary exposure during the bombardment, but that aid would be forthcoming when the time came.

Bravo protested that a defence was impossible with the troops he had; that the battalion of Toluca had deserted almost in a body; and that the remainder were completely demoralized by the bombardment.

"I answered," said Santa Anna, "that the contagion of fear (*mal de espanto*) had also spread to those who were at the foot of the rock, and as all the troops were of the same quality I must be excused for

[1] See Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, I, 420.

not making the exchange he proposed; but that in the morning, if the enemy attacked, I would reinforce him in ample time (*con oportunidad*)."

And Santa Anna repeatedly expressed the opinion that the adding of men to the garrison of Chapultepec, so long as the bombardment was in progress, would merely result in a useless sacrifice of life, and that Bravo, with a thousand men, would have enough.[1] The San Blas battalion was sent back to the grove before the assault began the next morning; and at that time Bravo should have had eight hundred and thirty-two of the regular garrison, besides the students of the *Colegio Militar* and four hundred men of San Blas, making about thirteen hundred muskets in all. But there were probably some desertions during that night.

At about the time that Bravo and Santa Anna were thus conferring on Sunday evening, Scott summoned Generals Pillow, Quitman, and Worth for a conference at his headquarters in Tacubaya, at which they were to receive final instructions for the assault. Scott, at one time on Sunday, had thought of ordering an attack that night; but Lee, Beauregard, and Tower, who had made reconnoissances of the works during the afternoon, persuaded him it would be better to wait till morning, "to which he readily assented, as he appeared to be more in favor of the morning attack."[2] When, therefore, the three generals arrived a little later, Scott began by stating that it would be necessary to carry Chapultepec by storm the next morning, and some general conversation ensued.

"After a good many remarks and suggestions," said Quitman, "connected with the details of the expected movement . . . the conclusion of General Scott's instructions to me, to the best of my recollection, was that General Pillow should advance to his attack from his position on the west of Chapultepec to the assault of the fortress, while my division, for the support of which General Smith's brigade had been ordered to report to me, was ordered to advance simultaneously to the assault of the fortress, by the Tacubaya road; General

[1] *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 113.

[2] Testimony of Captain Lee; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 144.

Scott instructing both General Pillow and myself to move from our position to the assault at the signal, which he informed us would be the cessation of the firing of the heavy batteries, and particularly directing us to make the attack, as near as possible, simultaneous. A part of his plan and instructions was, that the batteries under the direction of General Pillow and myself should commence, at as early an hour as possible, an active cannonade upon the fortress, when the firing of the batteries would be stopped by his order, as a signal to advance to the assault."

It was also explained that General Twiggs would be directed to renew the feigned attack on the San Antonio gate with Riley's brigade, while the bombardment of Chapultepec would be continued "to make the enemy believe that we were repeating the game, or attack, played that day."[1]

In further preparation for the assault, Scott had directed that storming parties, each numbering two hundred and fifty men, should be organized from the two regular divisions of the army. The party from Worth's was to report to Pillow, and that from Twiggs's division was to report to Quitman. Scaling-ladders, pickaxes, and crow-bars had been previously collected by Worth, and were ordered distributed equally between Pillow's and Quitman's columns. Worth was ordered to hold his division in reserve, near the Molino del Rey.

In exact accordance with these carefully prepared plans, the American batteries again opened at daylight on Monday morning both on Chapultepec and on the lines near the San Antonio gate, and the final dispositions were made for the infantry assault. By about eight o'clock Scott, "judging that the time had arrived, by the effect of the missiles we had thrown," gave the concerted signal, and both columns advanced with alacrity.

Pillow's advance was made in three detachments. The first, consisting of one battalion of the "voltigeurs" (the tenth United States infantry) and the storming party from Worth's division, moved forward on the outside of the southerly park wall; the second, consisting of three regiments of

[1] Testimony of General Quitman, Captain Lee, and General Worth; *ibid.*, 258, 144, 193.

infantry and the other battalion of the voltigeurs, advanced directly from the Molino del Rey through the Chapultepec grounds; while two regiments, under Colonel Trousdale, with Magruder's battery, were sent along the northerly park wall to intercept reinforcements from that side.

The first of these three detachments, keeping close under the southerly wall, reached, without much loss, a point nearly half a mile from the Molino del Rey where there was an opening in the wall. This was guarded by an infantry breastwork which was quickly carried, and the assailants thus entered the grove near the foot of the hill.

While this first detachment was advancing outside the walls, the second and larger detachment, accompanied by a battery of mountain howitzers, under Lieutenant Reno, issued from the Molino del Rey into the enclosure, deployed as skirmishers, and rushed at the intrenchments which skirted the grove. The Mexican troops, mainly the San Blas battalion, being assailed in front and on their left flank, were driven out and fell back through the grove toward the palace, both Mexicans and Americans availing themselves, as far as possible, of the shelter of the trees. The ground was wet, and the American advance was necessarily slow until the foot of the hill was fairly reached. At this stage of the conflict Pillow was hit by a grape-shot in the leg, inflicting a painful but not dangerous wound, and his fall seems to have resulted in some temporary confusion in the column. It also caused some confusion in Pillow's mind, for he sent a message to Worth begging him to bring up his whole division in support, and to make great haste or it would be too late. Worth sent one brigade (Clarke's) into the enclosure, but its presence was, as it turned out, quite unnecessary. His other brigade (Garland's) was sent to the north of the enclosure, in support of Colonel Trousdale's detachment.

After a short pause, the American column which had halted at the foot of the hill of Chapultepec, again pressed forward, carried the redan which stood half-way up the slope of the hill, and arrived at the wide ditch which was at the very foot of

the retaining wall of the terrace. So rapid had been the rush of the assailants that the mines near the redan were not fired. But here another delay occurred, because of the absence of the scaling-ladders, for the men who had been told to bear them had laid them down in the grove to take part in the battle. Meanwhile the American troops were sheltering themselves behind the rocks, and their rifles and muskets, aided by Reno's mountain howitzers, were keeping up a well-sustained fire against the windows of the palace and against the Mexicans posted on the zigzag road at its turn. But at last the ladders arrived and were laid across the ditch, the men crossed, and the ladders were quickly reared against the retaining wall. By this time all distinction among the several commands had been lost; the nearest men mounted the ladders; many were killed or wounded in the escalade, but others took their places in the wild scramble for the top; and in a very few moments the terrace was cleared of its defenders, and was in possession of the American troops. The first man up seems to have belonged to the voltigeurs.

Simultaneously with Pillow's movement on the western end of the palace, Quitman delivered his assault on the works at its southeastern end. His division, as already stated, had been reinforced during the night by Smith's brigade of Twiggs's division; and this brigade was sent to the east of the Tacubaya road across the marshy fields, for the double purpose of turning the Mexican batteries and of protecting the assaulting columns from skirmishers on their right flank. Headed by the storming party from Twiggs's division, Quitman's main body now advanced along the causeway to a point about two hundred feet from the Mexican batteries. Here the advance was temporarily checked, the column finding shelter in some dilapidated adobe buildings near the road. The volunteer regiments—South Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania—under General Shields, were thereupon sent off to the left of the road through the meadows, toward the southerly park wall, in an effort to gain the south front of the palace. Suffering under a heavy fire from the

defenders of Chapultepec, the South Carolina regiment, at the head of the detachment, reached the park wall and managed to breach it with pickaxes and crow-bars, while the New York and Pennsylvania regiments, continuing farther west along the wall, found and entered by the opening through which the voltigeur battalion and the storming party of Pillow's column had previously passed. All three regiments then poured into the enclosure to join Pillow's troops, which already were clustered about the southwestern corner of the palace walls or were in the act of scaling them.

While Smith was pushing forward to the east of the road and the volunteers were advancing on its west, Quitman's guns had been firing over the heads of the volunteers at the palace itself or into the grove about Chapultepec, as well as into the Mexican lines in the rear of the batteries. But as soon as the volunteers passed through the park wall Quitman ordered a cessation of the artillery fire and a renewal of the attack along the causeway. The storming parties, supported by the detachment of marines forming a part of the division, rushed forward along the road in the very face of the Mexican batteries, which were manned or supported by General Rangel's brigade.

"The Mexicans behind their batteries and breastworks stood with more than usual firmness. For a short time the contest was hand-to-hand; swords and bayonets were crossed, and rifles clubbed. Resistance, however, was vain against the desperate valor of our brave troops. The batteries and strong works were carried, and the ascent of Chapultepec on that side laid open to an easy conquest." [1]

But before the batteries were completely carried the palace of Chapultepec was in possession of the American troops. Climbing up the ladders on the west, or gaining the roadway on the south, and so mounting to the gate under a musketry fire from the windows and roofs of the palace, the assailants were swarming on the terrace, and from the southeastern angle a heavy musketry fire was soon directed against the rear of the batteries on the road, which insured the success

[1] Quitman's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 413.

of Quitman's assault. At the same time the palace building was entered and taken.

"Although the Mexicans kept up a resistance for a time, it was soon overcome; but while it lasted the American soldiers showed more ferocity than had been exhibited by them during the whole course of the war. The remembrance of the murder of their wounded comrades on the field of Molino del Rey was still fresh, and, where resistance was made, quarter was rarely given. General Pérez was killed fighting; Colonel Caño, engineer of the castle, and a host of inferior officers and soldiers fell in the tumult; and although the struggle lasted but a few minutes, it was not until the soldiers were satiated with revenge, and the first fury consequent upon the successful assault had passed away, that the bloodshed was put a stop to."[1]

The American officers having at length got their men in hand, the different commands were segregated, and Scott himself arrived on the scene. Mounting to the roof, the whole field to the east lay plainly under his view.

While the attacks on the palace itself and the batteries near the southeastern corner of the enclosure were being thus carried to a successful conclusion, a separate engagement was being fought on the northerly side of the enclosure, where a road, the Calzada de Anzures, ran along the park wall. It has been already stated that Pillow had detached two regiments, with Magruder's battery of field artillery, under Colonel Trousdale, to advance on that side in order to prevent reinforcements from entering Chapultepec. Trousdale found in front of him a large Mexican force (the brigade of General Peña y Barragan) with some guns; and he was also exposed to artillery fire from the palace. A section of Magruder's battery, under Lieutenant Jackson, was sent forward along the road, with an infantry support; but Jackson's horses and most of his men were killed or disabled, Trousdale himself was badly wounded, and his men were suffering severe loss.[2]

[1] Ripley, II, 423. The author, as one of Pillow's aides, took an active part in the attack.

[2] Jackson felt that his opportunity for distinction had come, and he exposed himself with reckless courage on this occasion.—(Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson*, I, 51.)

While this conflict was going on, with little advantage to the Americans, Garland's brigade of Worth's division, which had been sent forward to this point in response to Pillow's request for help, with the light battalion and Duncan's battery, came round the northwestern corner of the enclosure. Garland's infantry at once deployed in the field to the left and soon drove back the Mexicans, and the united force under Worth advanced along the wall to the Calzada de la Verónica, where it ran north toward the San Cosmé causeway. With this movement the attack ended. The hill was taken, the enclosure and the ground all about it were entirely cleared of Mexican troops, and few obstacles remained between the American army and the two western gates of the city.

The total numbers actually engaged on each side were probably not very unequal. The American force consisted of the whole of Scott's army, with the exception, first, of Riley's brigade of Twiggs's division, which had been held in observation on the south side of the city; second, of the cavalry, a part of which had been detached to watch the Mexican cavalry west of the Molino del Rey and a part to help guard the principal depot at Mixcoac; and, third, of some other detachments, numbering less than three hundred men, at the same place. The American force engaged, according to Scott's report, amounted in all to 7,180.

The Mexicans engaged, including, of course, the troops in and near the batteries at the foot of the hill, must have numbered about the same, or perhaps a little less. In addition, Alvarez, with his cavalry and some infantry—probably a force of some six or seven hundred raw troops from Toluca—occupied the hacienda of Morales, west of the Molino del Rey, but they remained useless spectators of the conflict.

The Mexican losses were large, if the prisoners and deserters be included, and were estimated in General Pillow's report at about eighteen hundred. The American losses were never separately stated, for the troops hardly paused after the palace had been taken, but pushed on directly for the city itself, where, as will be seen, further severe fighting

occurred, which ended only with the complete occupation of the capital itself.[1]

[1] Scott's report of the storming of Chapultepec, with the reports of his subordinates (which include all the events of September 12 and 13, 1847), are contained in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 375–431. Much testimony was also taken in reference to Pillow's attack in two courts of inquiry on his conduct, printed in Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess. Other accounts of eye-witnesses will be found in Ripley, II, 413–428; Semmes, 453–456; Wilcox, 459–468; Quitman, I, 380–389; II, 308–310. Santa Anna's report is printed in the appendix to his *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 111–115. Other Mexican official reports have not been published (except in the newspapers of the day), but copious extracts are printed in Ros Bárcena, 454–488. Reference may also be made to *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 305–317.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF MEXICO—FINAL MILITARY OPERATIONS

General Scott had given no orders as to what was to be done after Chapultepec was taken; but, without instructions, a pursuit of the defeated and disorganized Mexicans had been begun and was being hotly pressed by the time Scott himself had reached the palace and looked down on the meadows and causeways at his feet. Worth, pushing back the defenders along the northerly park wall, had turned north on the Calzada de la Verónica with all the force under his command; and Smith's brigade, forming temporarily a part of Quitman's command, had turned east on the Calzada de Belén. Each had advanced several hundred yards by the time Scott was able to get a clear view of the field of operations.

"Deeming it all-important," he reported, "to profit by our successes, and the consequent dismay of the enemy, which could not be otherwise than general, I hastened to despatch, from Chapultepec—first Clarke's brigade and then Cadwalader's, to the support of Worth, and gave orders that the necessary heavy guns should follow. Pierce's brigade was, at the same time sent to Quitman, and in the course of the afternoon, I caused some additional siege pieces to be added to the train. Then, after designating the 15th infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Howard—Morgan, the colonel, had been disabled by a wound at Churubusco—as the garrison of Chapultepec, and giving directions for the care of the prisoners of war, the captured ordnance and ordnance stores, I proceeded to join the advance of Worth."[1]

The causeways by which Worth and Quitman's commands respectively advanced were wide and solid struct-

[1] Scott's Report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 381.

ures, well elevated above the level of the marshes they traversed. Down the middle of each ran an aqueduct, the city's water supply, which rested upon open arches and massive pillars of masonry, and afforded, said Scott, "fine points both for attack and defence." The arches were perhaps of four or five feet span, and the columns four feet thick; so that, while affording some cover, the arches could not shelter many men at one time. It is also to be noted that vehicles on one roadway could not generally turn off onto the other. There were, however, certain places at which wider arched openings had been provided for this purpose.

Worth, pushing along northerly with his artillery on the westerly roadway of the Calzada de la Verónica, found one such turnout about twelve hundred yards from the northeast corner of the Chapultepec enclosure. Here he halted, crossed over Duncan's battery to the easterly side of the aqueduct, and sent it, with the light battalion in support, along a road that branched off toward the east. This branch road ran only as far as a point known as the Hacienda de la Teja; but from there Duncan was able to shell a battery on the Calzada de Belén, which was endeavoring to check Quitman's advance.

While halted at this point,[1] Worth was overtaken by three squadrons of dragoons and Clarke's brigade,[2] and the whole force again advanced northwardly along the causeway, with parties of infantry thrown out upon the marshy meadows on either side. There was some resistance near the junction with the San Cosmé road—a point referred to in the Mexican accounts as Santo Tomás—where a redoubt had been thrown up. The redoubt and some houses near by were only held by infantry, and the defenders were driven out without much difficulty. Here Worth halted once more to reorganize his column before attempting the San Cosmé gate. A part of his leading troops had, however, already

[1] For an hour and a half, according to one authority, who severely blames Worth for the delay.—(Stevens, 101.)

[2] The sixth infantry, forming a part of Clarke's brigade, had gone astray after the capture of Chapultepec and joined Quitman's column, with which it remained the rest of the day.

gone half-way down the road toward the gate, and had captured a barricade, before they could be recalled.

After remaining at Santo Tomás for a considerable time, during which Scott came up and ordered an immediate advance, Worth pushed on slowly and with great caution, leaving Cadwalader's brigade to hold the Santo Tomás redoubt. All the way from Santo Tomás to the built-up portion of the city the San Cosmé causeway was lined with houses; and about midway between the city and Santo Tomás stood the garita, protected by several barricades across the roadways on either side of the aqueduct. The westernmost of these barricades, as already stated, had been taken by Worth's infantry before they could be recalled; and when Worth finally advanced in full force, the Mexicans had placed two pieces of artillery behind it. Worth thereupon resorted to the same method he had adopted with success at Monterey, and which he had learned from the Texans. Sending Clarke's brigade to the right and Garland's to the left of the causeway, the men took possession of the houses and broke their way through the walls until they came abreast of the first barricade, which was at once abandoned by its defenders.

Beyond that barricade the American advance was resumed in the same manner; but it was materially helped by placing a mountain howitzer in the belfry of the Church of San Cosmé, not more than two or three hundred yards from the garita.[1] A second howitzer was placed on another commanding building, and with the help of these guns and the slow but steady advance through the buildings, Worth's troops by five o'clock in the afternoon were well up to the garita. A piece of artillery was then boldly advanced along the road; the Americans—mounting to the tops of the houses on each side—poured a heavy fire of musketry at short range into the works near the garita; and almost in a moment the place was won.

It was now possible for Worth's whole force to advance directly along the causeway and to bring up the heavy ar-

[1] This was an inspiration of Lieutenant U. S. Grant of the fourth infantry.

tillery which had been held at Santo Tomás until the road was clear. By nine o'clock at night a twenty-four-pounder gun and a ten-inch mortar were in position, and a few shots were fired from each in the direction of the Government Palace, by way of notifying the inhabitants of the city that the gate was in possession of the Americans. At about the same time, Worth was reinforced by Riley's brigade.

It had been Scott's intention that Worth's should be the main attack, and Quitman's in the nature of a feint.

"I had been, from the first," he reported, "well aware that the western or San Cosmé, was the less difficult route to the centre and conquest of the capital; and therefore intended that Quitman should only manœuvre and threaten the Belén or southwestern gate, in order to favor the main attack by Worth—knowing that the strong defences at the Belén were directly under the guns of the much stronger fortress, called the *citadel*, just within. . . . These views I repeatedly, in the course of the day, communicated to Major General Quitman; but being in hot pursuit—gallant himself, and ably supported by Brigadier Generals Shields and Smith—Shields badly wounded before Chapultepec and refusing to retire—as well as by all the officers and men of his column—Quitman continued to press forward."[1]

The advance of Quitman's column, as above stated, was composed of Smith's brigade, which had previously been deployed in the fields southeast of Chapultepec. To this brigade were soon added the whole of Quitman's own division, the ninth and twelfth infantry regiments from Pierce's brigade of Pillow's division, the sixth infantry from Worth's, and portions of other corps which had gone astray in the confusion following the assault on the palace. The column was temporarily halted by the first barricade across the road, which was situated about a mile from Chapultepec;[2] but that obstacle was presently carried, with the effective aid, it would seem, of the fire in flank from Duncan's battery of Worth's division already mentioned.[3]

[1] Scott's Report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 382.

[2] According to the map published with Quitman's official report. A table of distances given in a footnote to Claiborne's *Life of Quitman*, I, 356, is inconsistent with the map and evidently incorrect.

[3] Quitman, in his report, speaks of Duncan's "brisk fire of artillery" as having occurred when the column was approaching the garita of Belén. This

Quitman here halted to reorganize his column and make preparations for the attack on the batteries at the garita. The South Carolina regiment of volunteers, armed with muskets and bayonets, and the rifle regiment of Smith's brigade, who had no bayonets, were intermingled—three rifles and three bayonets being placed under each arch of the aqueduct. In this order, the two regiments were to lead the attack by advancing from arch to arch; and in this manner they pressed forward under "a tremendous fire of artillery and small arms from the batteries at the garita, the Paseo, and a large body of the enemy on the Piedad road."[1]

Santa Anna himself had retreated to the garita of Belén after the fall of Chapultepec and had supervised the arrangements for its defence. He brought up four pieces of artillery which had been previously so placed as to command the Piedad road, and he posted in support of the guns various detachments, made up partly from the troops who had guarded the roads near Chapultepec and partly from troops who had been held in reserve in the citadel. These parties were in addition to the regular garrison of the garita under General Terrés, which numbered less than two hundred men with three four-pounder guns. Having made these dispositions, Santa Anna next went to the garita of San Cosmé, but he failed to designate any one of the several generals near Belén to command the defences at that point—an omission which seems to have caused confusion.

As the American column slowly gained ground along the Belén causeway the Mexican troops suffered severely from the fire of the rifles. A part of their infantry, which had been engaged at Chapultepec, and which Terrés had considered as his reserve, fell back without notice to him. The garita itself was being badly knocked about by Quitman's artillery, and the small force at the garita, now reduced, according to Terrés, to less than eighty men, was demoralized.

statement does not accord with the evidence of Worth (in his report) or of Stevens (in his *Campaigns*) or with the maps of the locality.

[1] The Paseo here referred to was a road running north from the Belén gate through what was then open country. It was called by the Mexicans the Paseo Nuevo or Paseo de Bucareli; and is now the Calle de Bucareli.

Terrés, therefore, abandoned the garita, taking his artillery with him and falling back to the citadel and at twenty minutes past one Quitman's column entered the gate.

About three hundred yards further on, upon the north side of the street, was the citadel. A little further, on the south side of the street, was the solid and ancient building of the *Colegio de las Mochas de Belén*—then a workhouse for women, and afterward the great prison of the capital. Otherwise the ground immediately within the garita was open, and the American troops were without protection except such as was afforded by the garita itself, the arches of the aqueduct, and the intrenchments which had been thrown up by the Mexicans. To advance further was soon found to be impossible, and for the remainder of the afternoon Quitman and his men were reduced to holding on with dogged energy to the ground they had already gained.

Santa Anna learned at San Cosmé of the loss of the garita of Belén. With three battalions of regulars he hurried to the citadel and sent orders to the troops on the east side of the city to join him. He reached the citadel just as Quitman's men were coming past the garita, and they were driven back to shelter by the fire of Santa Anna's reinforcements. Here Santa Anna met Terrés. "Blind with rage," the former wrote, "I struck him two or three times, ordered his sword and his insignia of rank to be taken from him—declaring him to be an unworthy servant of a nation which had overwhelmed him with kindness," and ordered him under arrest. Terrés was to be Santa Anna's scapegoat.[1]

From this time, perhaps about two o'clock in the afternoon until almost five, the Mexicans under Santa Anna's direct command kept up a steady fire of artillery from the citadel, from the batteries on the Paseo, and from the *Colegio de las Mochas*. A number of sorties were also attempted. "I endeavored," says Santa Anna, "to dislodge the enemy with the active battalion of Morelia and other

[1] Santa Anna's Report, *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 117. Terrés was duly tried by a military tribunal, General Micheltorena, of California fame, acting as his advocate, and was acquitted.—(Roa Bárcena, 494.)

detachments, and it was not possible, although our soldiers on this occasion acted with extraordinary courage." [1]

At last, about five o'clock, Santa Anna received an urgent message from San Cosmé. He hurried back at once, but arrived only just in time to witness the capture of that garita by Worth; and, collecting as best he could the scattered troops, Santa Anna marched them back again to the citadel, which he re-entered at about seven o'clock in the evening and found everything quiet. The firing on Quitman had ceased at dark.

Until after midnight the positions of the several combatants remained unchanged. Worth and Quitman were both bringing up their heavy artillery, and the latter was engaged in intrenching himself to resist further sorties from the citadel. Within the citadel Santa Anna was holding a council of war.

"In the council," according to Santa Anna, "the events of that and the previous days were rehearsed. Regrets were expressed at the situation to which we had been reduced by the disobedience of some, the cowardice of others, and the general lack of *morale* of our army, which was such that we could not look for any better conduct. It was also explained in regard to the latter point that the continual revolutions, our social disorganization, and the bad system of recruiting the army had greatly aggravated this evil, at a time when, by reason of our distress, the soldiers were not supplied with what belonged to them, as had actually happened on this very day, when they had not partaken of food; that supplies had not been furnished them for the four days previous; and that no one knew whether on the next day they would have anything to eat. The lack of ammunition for another day's fighting was also explained, and the small number of men who remained; and finally that as we were reduced to the mere precincts of the citadel it was certain that the enemy would attack it with artillery (*apuraria sus proyectiles*) and it would not be possible to remain in it two hours. To defend the buildings in the city would be to run the risk of its destruction without a hope of success since the population, with few exceptions, took no part in the struggle." [2]

It was, therefore, after some discussion, unanimously agreed to evacuate the city before dawn. The movement

[1] Santa Anna's Report, *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 118.
[2] *Ibid.*, 119.

was begun at once, and by one o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, the fourteenth of September, the Mexican army—or what remained of it, for many had already deserted—was on its way to Guadalupe Hidalgo. Alvarez, with his cavalry, had previously been ordered from his post at the Hacienda de Morales to the same town; and there Santa Anna found himself, by early morning, at the head of some few thousands of defeated and disorganized troops.

Simultaneously with the evacuation of the city by the army, the municipal authorities sent out a deputation to wait on Scott and endeavor to obtain favorable terms of capitulation. The party, at one o'clock in the morning, came with a white flag to Worth's advanced post, and he sent them under escort to Tacubaya, where they arrived at about four. They presented their requests, to which, says Scott,

"I promptly replied, that I would sign no capitulation; that the city had been virtually in our possession from the time of the lodgments effected by Worth and Quitman the day before; that I regretted the silent escape of the Mexican army; that I should levy upon the city a moderate contribution for special purposes; and that the American army should come under no terms, not *self*-imposed—such only as its own honor, the dignity of the United States, and the spirit of the age, should, in my opinion, imperiously demand and impose."[1]

At the same time orders were sent to Worth and Quitman "to advance slowly and cautiously" (to guard against treachery) toward the heart of the city, and to occupy its stronger and more commanding points. Worth therefore advanced straight ahead along what is now the Puente de Alvarado and the Avenida de los Hombres Ilustres, along the northerly side of the Alameda; then turned south along the easterly end of the park, and halted about sunrise, by Scott's order, in front of the present site of the Opera House. Quitman, before receiving Scott's order, had been approached at dawn by a white flag from the citadel, the bearers of which informed him that the city had been abandoned. Finding

[1] Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 383. The contribution levied on the city was later fixed at $150,000.

the information true, Quitman moved through some of the smaller streets into the Calle de San Juan Letran, passed the spot where Worth was halted, and proceeded straight down the Avenida de San Francisco to the Plaza de la Constitución. He found the Palace of the Government being looted by bands of native thieves whom he quickly drove out, and then hoisted the American flag and put the palace in charge of the battalion of marines.

At about eight o'clock in the morning Scott and his staff rode in and entered the palace. They had hardly done so when a desultory fire of musketry broke out from the houses in various parts of the city. The first shot, according to General Worth, was fired at a group of officers at the head of his column and wounded Brigadier-General Garland. A number of the Americans were hit.

"The free use of heavy battering guns upon every building from which fire proceeded," as Worth wrote, "together with musketry from some of our men thrown out as skirmishers, soon quelled these hidden and dastardly enemies. . . . This was no time for half-way measures; and if many innocent persons suffered incidentally, under the just infliction of punishment we found it necessary to bestow on these miscreants from the jails, the responsibility should rest on the barbarous and vindictive chief who imposed upon us the necessity."[1]

In less than thirty-six hours these stern methods of repression were completely effective. It was, indeed, no time, as Worth remarked, for "half-way measures." Self preservation, as well as the imperative need for order in the interest of the city itself, required the summary use of force. It is to be feared that in many cases the inhabitants of houses from which American troops had been fired on were indiscriminately killed and that some unoffending inhabitants were shot in the streets; but there was no looting, and on the whole the more respectable elements of society seem to have been relieved by the restoration of order.

They had been in a state of consternation, according to the British minister, when they learned that the American army was actually within the city.

[1] Worth's Report; *ibid.*, 393.

"Much more anxiety, however," he continued, "was manifested in consequence of General Tornel having thought proper to arm the 'Leperos' with knives for the ostensible purpose of destroying the American soldiers; added to which the gates of the principal prison were thrown open by the Mexican Authorities just before the evacuation of the city, whereby nearly two thousand criminals were let loose upon society. . . . Considering the composition of the American Army, great moderation and respect of property has been shewn, and every effort has been made by the officers to tranquillize the people."[1]

The aspect of the city, while the disturbances lasted, much resembled its aspect during a domestic revolution. Churches and shops were closed and the streets were deserted. But there was this difference: in the revolutions the contending parties were in the habit of firing upon each other from safe distances, and casualties were few, whereas now the Americans were in deadly earnest. "Our people in a single day," says Hitchcock, "killed more Mexicans in the streets than fell during an entire three weeks of one of their domestic wars."[2] "This matter of being killed," wrote another staff officer, "was not (to use a Hibernicism) what they had been accustomed to."[3]

Scott's course in this unfortunate business has been commended by the Mexicans themselves as being fundamentally right and humane;[4] and he was supported at the time by the authorities of the municipality and the authorities of the church. Confidence was gradually restored. The inhabitants began returning from the neighboring country. The streets were again filled with people. The shops were opened. The archbishop, after "some plain talk" from General Scott,[5] opened the cathedral at six o'clock on Monday morning, September 20, and from that time forward until the close of the war the American army continued in undisturbed possession of the Mexican capital.[6]

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, Sept. 28, 1847, No. 86; *F. O. MSS.* Mexican historians, it should be noted, attribute the firing on the American troops principally to deserters and members of the national guard.—(Roa Bárcena, 507.)

[2] Hitchcock, 307.

[3] Semmes, 466.

[4] Roa Bárcena, 511.

[5] Hitchcock, 306.

[6] The reports of General Scott and his subordinates in regard to the attack on the garitas, the entry of the city, and the desultory fighting in the streets are printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 375–431. Santa Anna's report is

Scott in his official report to his government asserted that in the two days of September 12 and 13, after deducting the garrison of Mixcoac (then the general depot) and that of Tacubaya, his whole force was but 7,180, and that "after deducting the new garrison of Chapultepec, with the killed and wounded of the two days, we took possession (September 14) of this great capital with less than six thousand men."[1] Well might he congratulate himself and his army upon the brilliant result of the campaign, begun at Puebla thirty-eight days before.

It is quite impossible to form any satisfactory estimate of the Mexican force engaged at the gates of the capital. The losses by desertion had been so great and continuous, the army had been in such a state of disintegration at the time, that its strength from this cause alone was diminishing in a steadily increasing ratio. During the American attack on Chapultepec a large garrison was left in the city, and probably more than four thousand horse and foot watched the battle from the Hacienda de Morales. During the attacks on the garitas the cavalry was not employed at all, and although reinforcements from the southern and eastern gates were brought up it is likely that these parts of the city were not wholly denuded of troops. The most that can be asserted with any degree of confidence is that Santa Anna, at the close of the thirteenth of September, must have had under his command, including his cavalry, twice as many men as Scott.

The latter doubtless persistently overestimated the numerical force of his opponent; but he was able to state, with at least approximate accuracy, the Mexican losses. Summing up the results of his campaign in the valley of Mexico, he declared that—

"this small force has beaten . . . the whole Mexican army, of (at the beginning) thirty-odd thousand men—posted, always, in chosen posi-

in the appendix to his *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 114–120. Reports by other eye-witnesses are to be found in Ripley, II, 428–445; Wilcox, 469–488; Hitchcock, 303–307; Semmes, 457–466; Quitman, I, 367–391. See also Roa Bárcena, 490–511; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 317–333.

[1] Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 384.

tions, behind entrenchments, or more formidable defences of nature and art; killed or wounded, of that number, more than 7,000 officers and men; taken 3,730 prisoners, one-seventh officers, including 13 generals, of whom 3 had been presidents of this republic; captured more than 20 colors and standards, 75 pieces of ordnance, besides 57 wall-pieces, 20,000 small arms, an immense quantity of shots, shells, powder, &c., &c." [1]

The losses of the American army in accomplishing these great results had not been slight. On September 12, 13, and 14 they had lost 130 killed, 703 wounded, and 29 missing, or 862 in all—Quitman's command alone having 473 casualties. During the whole campaign the total casualties in battle had amounted to no less than 2,703, or nearly twenty-five per cent. of the force which left Puebla near the beginning of August.[2]

These heavy losses led to the severe criticisms both of Scott's strategy and his tactics, of which the most serious have been already mentioned; and he was not spared in respect to Chapultepec and the attack on the gates of the capital. Many of his principal officers thought the southern gates of the city should have been attacked, in preference to the western, and some found fault with his bombardment of Chapultepec and the disposition of his troops.[3] Grant, who professed great admiration for Scott's generalship, thought Chapultepec might readily have been turned. "In later years, if not at the time, the battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec," he wrote, "have seemed to me to be wholly unnecessary." Indeed, he questioned the whole strategy of the valley campaign, and thought the line of Scott's march should have passed thirty miles north of Puebla and across the plains of Apam; but, as he philosophically observed, "General Scott's successes are an answer to all criticism."[4]

Scott's adversary escaped serious criticism for the days

[1] Scott's Report; *ibid.*, 384.

[2] See detailed returns appended to Scott's Report; *ibid.*, 431–470.

[3] See Ripley, II, 467–486, for strongly adverse comments. These are replied to at length in Stevens, 88–105.

[4] Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, I, 154, 166.

of the twelfth and thirteenth of September. It was obvious that, being threatened both at Chapultepec and the San Antonio gate, he could not venture to leave either unguarded; and although Bravo complained that he had been left at Chapultepec without adequate support, he seems to have had as many troops as could man the works about the palace without getting in each other's way. The real causes of defeat were the utter demoralization of the Mexican army, officers included,[1] and the hopeless inefficiency and lack of enterprise of their cavalry.

In spite of the condition of his army Santa Anna was not yet ready to abandon the contest. To do so at that time must have seemed to him an abandonment of all hope for his own future; and if Mexico was to be ultimately forced to yield, he would let some one else bear the responsibility of surrender. For a few hours he was even possessed of the delusion that the capital might be regained.

His first idea, after arriving with his beaten troops at Guadalupe Hidalgo, was to endeavor by a rapid movement to overwhelm the small American garrison at Puebla, and by interposing between Scott and the sea to strike a dangerous and possibly fatal blow at the invading army. The plan, if Santa Anna's information was correct, was not without prospects of success. He expected to find in or near Puebla over three thousand national guards and guerrilleros. He therefore sent General Alvarez with all the men under his command—now only six hundred in number—by way of Texcoco and Texmelúcan, while Santa Anna himself, with two thousand horse and four light field-pieces, set out by the plains of Apam and Tlaxcala. The union of these forces would bring 5,700 men into line at Puebla, with which to attack an American force of less than 2,200, including the sick. Besides, it was not unreasonable to expect recruits from the population of Puebla itself. Santa Anna therefore lost no time. He directed ex-President Herrera to

[1] The officers, says Grant, would "simply quit, without being particularly whipped, but because they had fought enough."—(*Ibid.*, 169.)

start at once with all the remaining infantry and artillery and march to Querétaro, a hundred and fifty miles north. At the same time Santa Anna, with his detachment, set out for Puebla.

He had gone only about twelve miles when he was overtaken at the little village of San Cristóbal by some inhabitants of the city of Mexico, who begged him to return with his army and take part in the struggle which they assured him was going on in the city streets. Their story was that the sight of the American flag hoisted on the Palace of the Government had caused such excitement that the people had risen *en masse*, had penned up Scott's troops in the main plaza, and had taken six of his guns.

"I confess," wrote Santa Anna, "that I was extremely moved by this plausible story." He therefore instantly determined to retrace his steps, and did so, at the same time sending orders to Herrera to return with his infantry. By the afternoon of September 14 Santa Anna, after his agitating night and the long march and countermarch of the day, was back at the Peralvillo garita, the northern gate of the city.

"Señor Alvarez and I," he wrote, "went as far as the streets of the capital, in order to assure ourselves with our own eyes of what was happening in the city and to act according to circumstances. . . . As great as my enthusiasm was over the exaggerated reports that were given me at San Cristóbal, so great also was the annoyance caused me by being undeceived; for I could only observe a few scattering shots which various individuals were firing from street corners at the enemy. The tale of the capture of pieces of artillery was false, as also that of the general rising of all classes, and their besieging the invaders in the Plaza."

Nevertheless he stationed some of Alvarez's men near the Peralvillo gate and sent parties of cavalry into the suburbs of the capital to aid in any rising that might be attempted; but though they watched all day on Wednesday, the fifteenth of September, they perceived no symptoms of a general revolt. On the contrary, he was handed that morning a copy of a proclamation signed by Manuel Reyes Veramendi,

the principal alcalde, urging the people of Mexico to preserve the peace. Santa Anna at once sent Veramendi an indignant letter, expressing astonishment at what he called a shameful and unpatriotic act, and threatening him and the other members of the ayuntamiento with all the penalties of treason for daring to discourage the citizens "who rightly defend their homes, their daughters and their wives."[1]

On the next morning, Thursday, September 16, Pacheco and Alcorta, the Secretaries of Relations and War, arrived at Guadalupe, and at their instance, or at least with their concurrence, Santa Anna issued a decree dated that day, in which he resigned his office as President of the republic, on the ground that it was necessary to continue the war at all hazards, and it was not proper to expose the chief magistrate to its risks. He further, by virtue (as he asserted) of the extraordinary powers conferred on him by Congress, directed the president of the Supreme Court of Justice to discharge the duties of President, associating with himself Generals Alcorta and Herrera, who were to reside at Querétaro until Congress should otherwise direct. Santa Anna then resumed his march for Puebla, where he arrived on the afternoon of September 21.

The American garrison left by Scott at Puebla when he marched for the valley of Mexico consisted, as already related, of only 393 effectives, with about 1,800 invalids, all under the command of Colonel Thomas Childs, of the regular army. They were expected to hold this important point upon Scott's line of communications, to keep in order a city of some eighty thousand inhabitants and to guard a depot of valuable supplies.

The city of Puebla, built upon a plain more than seven thousand feet above the sea, near the eastern base of the great volcanoes which guard the valley of Mexico, was noted for its multitude of churches, its wide and regular streets, and its large number of old solidly built Spanish houses. On the north and east sides of the city runs a small stream,

[1] Santa Anna's report in *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 120–122. The correspondence with Veramendi is at pp. 131–133.

just beyond which rises an abrupt ridge whose two highest points, known as the Cerro de Loreto and the Cerro de Guadalupe, then constituted the principal points of military defence. The first of these, the Cerro de Loreto, was crowned by a regular fortified work, which mounted at that time two guns and a few mountain howitzers; while a massive church on the Cerro de Guadalupe was almost as effective to resist any attack unsupported by heavy artillery. Just within the northeasterly quarter of the city, and not far from the foot of these hills, at a corner of the Plaza de San José, were large barracks known as the Cuartel San José, in which was established the principal depot of the American troops. The sick were, however, quartered in hospitals in other parts of the city.

Hardly had the last of Scott's troops left Puebla when unmistakable signs of hostility began to show themselves among the populace. A number of mules were stolen, a party of men sent out to recover them were attacked and driven back, straggling soldiers were cut off and murdered, and shots were occasionally fired at the barracks; but for some time nothing like an organized attack was begun. The alcalde of the city and the better class of inhabitants endeavored to preserve order; yet as time went on the attacks became more and more frequent and serious, until by the night of the thirteenth of September something resembling a siege was in progress.[1] The assailants now consisted principally of irregular troops raised in the neighborhood, under the command of General Rea, of the Mexican army; but as these were mostly mounted men, badly armed and unprovided with artillery, they could make no very serious impression upon the garrison, which was now wholly withdrawn to the shelter of the San José barracks and the adjacent posts upon the hills outside the city.

For many days and nights a noisy but not very effectual fusillade was kept up, "after the manner," says Ripley, "of

[1] The news of the armistice in the city of Mexico reached Puebla about August 30, and on the evening of September 12 it was reported that the armistice was at an end. This probably encouraged the attempt to besiege the American garrison.

Mexican revolutions," and relatively little injury was done to the garrison. Many of the sick had so far recovered as to be able to bear arms, but Childs could only count on about five hundred fighting men, and the necessity of constant watchfulness was extremely wearing to the limited number of effectives.

Such was the state of affairs on September 21, when Santa Anna and his men reached Puebla. As they were mostly cavalry equipped with short-range carbines, they were not much better fitted than Rea's guerrilleros to assault the American posts, but Santa Anna's artillery, if properly handled, might have made some impression. Santa Anna, however, had no better success than Rea. But on September 25, he sent in a formal summons to Colonel Childs, warning him that he was now in face of an army of eight thousand men, and offering to permit him to march out with the honors of war, a demand which Childs at once refused, stating that he felt "fully confident" of being able to maintain his post. And for the next week the same sort of feeble and unorganized attacks upon the American posts went on, without any advantage to the Mexican arms.

But on the first day of October Santa Anna, having received news of the approach of an American military train with a strong escort from Vera Cruz and Jalapa, left Rea in the city with a few guerrilleros to continue the siege, and started with the rest of his men to meet these new enemies. He had only got as far as Amozoc, eleven miles from Puebla, when the national guards of Puebla began deserting in such numbers that Santa Anna feared his whole force would be dissipated, and he therefore sent back to Puebla all the remaining local troops, together with the whole of Alvarez's small body of Oaxaca infantry and a portion of his cavalry. With his remaining troops Santa Anna advanced through the pass of El Pinal as far as Nopalúcan, having with him at this time, according to his own account, a little more than a thousand cavalry and six light field-pieces.

The village of Nopalúcan is distant somewhat more than

thirty miles northeasterly from Puebla, on the road to Perote and Jalapa, and was then of some importance as the junction of roads leading in various directions. One road led southeasterly toward Orizaba and Córdova, and another northwesterly over the plains of Apam toward the northern part of the valley of Mexico.

While halted at Nopalúcan Santa Anna received information from Querétaro that General Isidro Reyes was on his way thence to join him, "with one brigade and two siege pieces." Hoping, it would seem, to effect a junction with Reyes and then fall upon the rear of the Americans, Santa Anna—instead of waiting, as he had intended, in the pass of El Pinal, on the Puebla road, west of Nopalúcan—marched off ten miles northwesterly to Huamantla, a village set in the midst of a fertile valley. This was on Friday, the eighth of October. Reyes, however, had not yet arrived, and leaving the six pieces of artillery under a small guard in Huamantla, Santa Anna, with the bulk of his cavalry, marched back across country to watch the pass.

The approaching American force, which Santa Anna was hoping to defeat, consisted of about twenty-five hundred men, with eight pieces of artillery, under the command of General Joseph Lane—a political general who had commanded a brigade of Indiana volunteers at the battle of Buena Vista. He had continued with Taylor's army through the summer of 1847, but early in September he was despatched with a brigade made up of the newly organized fourth Indiana and fourth Ohio volunteers to join Scott's column. At Vera Cruz he was put in command of a body of troops consisting of two batteries or parts of batteries of regular artillery, a company of Louisiana mounted volunteers, and two detachments of recruits for various of the regular regiments then at the front—in addition to his two regiments of Indiana and Ohio volunteers.

Leaving Vera Cruz on September 19, 1847, Lane advanced without opposition as far as the Paso de Ovejas, where he had a skirmish with some guerrilleros, and then without further difficulty marched on to Jalapa, where he overtook another

detachment, under Major Lally, which had left Vera Cruz on the sixth of August. Lally's detachment consisted of eleven companies of various regular regiments, a company of Georgia mounted volunteers and another of Louisiana mounted volunteers, and two six-pounder guns. He had in charge a train of sixty-four wagons, and all the way to Jalapa he had been constantly in contact with strong guerilla forces, with whom he had fought a number of serious engagements, his losses in killed, wounded, and missing being 105 men out of his small force.[1] He had felt it impossible, without reinforcements, to advance farther with his wagon-train.

Starting from Jalapa on the afternoon of the first of October, the united forces (leaving behind them their sick and wounded and one of the troops of Louisiana horse) reached a hacienda about three miles east of Nopalúcan, where they came in sight of small parties of Santa Anna's lancers. Lane was here informed that the Mexican troops were not holding the Puebla road, as he had expected, but were posted at Huamantla. He was told that they numbered four thousand men and six guns, and he resolved to take the initiative. On the morning, therefore, of Saturday, the ninth of October, Lane started out for Huamantla, with about two thousand men and one battery of artillery, leaving the Ohio regiment, a part of the regular infantry, and one battery of artillery to guard the wagons.

When about two miles from Huamantla the cavalry were sent ahead, and at once captured the village—which was weakly held—together with Santa Anna's artillery. But by this time Santa Anna had been notified of Lane's march, and had started back to meet him. As the toiling American infantry approached, they saw Santa Anna's lancers galloping in from the left, and an unequal race was begun for the village. The American cavalry, heavily outnumbered, was badly cut up before the infantry could arrive, but courage-

[1] Lally's force was accompanied by Baron von Grone, a young German officer, who on his return to Germany wrote a book entitled *Briefe über Nord-Amerika und Mexiko*, in which he gave an account of these affairs. See pages 37–58.

ously kept up the unequal contest; and as soon as Lane's main body arrived the Mexicans scattered and fled, having recaptured some of their artillery, though leaving two of their guns in the American hands. There was some looting and disorder, but late in the afternoon Lane collected his men and started back toward the hacienda where he had left his wagons. His losses were thirteen killed and eleven wounded, besides men reported missing, who had probably got drunk and remained behind in the village.

Santa Anna's losses were estimated by the Americans at one hundred and fifty. He himself stated them to be two killed and seven wounded, with a number missing, at least two of whom, Colonel de la Vega and Major Iturbide, were known to be prisoners; but the real damage done to Santa Anna was in the conclusive demoralization of his force and the consequent opening of the road from Nopalúcan to Puebla for the passage of Lane's troops. The latter found the pass of El Pinal undefended.

"The pass," wrote one of Lane's officers, "was well guarded and barricades were thrown across the road in a number of places. The road ran along the side of a mountain; the left side being a very steep ascent, and the right was a deep precipice. If the Mexican chief had got us in there, I am of opinion that very few Americans would have been left to tell of the struggle at the Pinel pass." [1]

The next day, October 12, 1847, Lane's column reached the southern suburbs of Puebla about one o'clock in the afternoon, and could see Fort Loreto slowly and steadily firing at an unseen enemy. Lane divided his men into three columns, who advanced up as many separate streets. As they marched slowly in, they were fired on from church steeples and the roofs of houses, but after over an hour of this sort of fighting they had gained the heart of the city.

"About three o'clock," according to the author just quoted, "being very much fatigued, and a number of us wounded, faint and bleeding, we marched into the Grand plaza and halted under the portals of the

[1] Brackett, *General Lane's Brigade in Central Mexico*, 101.

houses. The great cathedral was on our left, and the palace of the Governor on our right. There was not a single Mexican to be seen."[1]

The fact was that Rea and Alvarez had by this time silently withdrawn their men and retreated to Atlixco, more than twenty-five miles away to the southwest. Thenceforward the American troops held Puebla without the slightest molestation, and, what was more important, Scott's communications with his base were uninterrupted. In August and September Lally, with a thousand men and two guns, could not get through from Vera Cruz.[2]

Meanwhile Santa Anna had been joined, near Huamantla, on the eleventh of October by General Reyes, whose footsore troops were in no condition for active operations. This reinforcement was soon followed by a messenger from Querétaro bearing orders, dated October 7, which directed Santa Anna to turn over his command to General Rincon, or, in his absence, to General Alvarez, and to hold himself in readiness to appear before a court of inquiry to answer for his conduct in the late campaign, and especially for the loss of the capital of the republic.

Santa Anna, after some hesitation, decided to obey. He turned over his command to Reyes, as neither Rincon nor Alvarez was on the spot, but he wrote to the government, on October 16, that, as President of the republic, he could only be tried by the method of impeachment prescribed in the Constitution; and that, although he had resigned his office a month before, he could lawfully resume the Presidency at any time before Congress had accepted the resignation.

[1] *Ibid.*, 112.

[2] The brief official report of the siege of Puebla will be found in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 471–475. The most detailed account of the events of the siege is in Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 248–346. The author, a private in the first Pennsylvania volunteers, kept a diary day by day of events as he saw them. Lane's report of the battle of Huamantla and of his march from Vera Cruz, together with subreports, are printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 476–495. Accounts of Lane's march and of the battle of Huamantla will be found in Brackett's *General Lane's Brigade in Central Mexico*, 53–112, and in Grone's *Briefe über Nord-Amerika und Mexiko*, 67. Santa Anna's own reports are in the appendix to his *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 123–125, 135–137. See also Ripley, II, 491–496; Brooks, 489–497; Wilcox, 493–496; Roa Bárcena, 516–521; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 344–352.

To his remaining handful of troops he issued an address in which he implied that he was being sacrificed in order that his enemies might conclude a shameful peace which he himself had not been willing to agree to.

Reyes soon marched back toward Querétaro, while Santa Anna set off to join his family at Tehuacan, a watering-place in the hills about seventy miles southeast of Puebla. Here he was very nearly captured by General Lane on January 23. Lane had been successfully occupied during the intervening months in clearing the country for many miles around Puebla of the more or less organized bodies of guerrilleros. Leaving Puebla on January 21 with about three hundred and fifty men, and marching by night, he arrived at Tehuacan just before daylight, but Santa Anna had fled a couple of hours before; and except for some isolated and minor operations, chiefly expeditions against the guerrilleros in the states of Puebla and Mexico, the operations of the American troops in the centre and northeastern part of the country were at an end.[1]

Santa Anna, after his hasty flight from Tehuacan, endeavored to reach the state of Oaxaca, but the then governor, Benito Juárez, refused him permission to come within that jurisdiction; and Santa Anna's courage and persistency having at last given out, he wrote to the government at Querétaro for permission to leave the country. His prestige was gone. His friends had left him. And under a safe-conduct from the American authorities he departed from Mexico on April 5, 1848, and eventually reached Jamaica, where he employed an abundant leisure in composing a defence of his conduct in the war with the United States.[2]

The British minister in Mexico, writing shortly after Santa Anna's resignation as President, had commented with precision upon his remarkable career. It would be hazardous, Bankhead explained, to say that Santa Anna's career was entirely over, although for the moment he had quitted the stage.

[1] As to Lane's several expeditions see Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 479–482, and H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 86–101; also Brackett, 146–247.

[2] *Apelacion al buen Criterio de los Nacionales y Estrangeros* (Mexico, 1849.)

"His present reign has been short and a very unhappy one for him; he has been beset by enemies and difficulties at every step, and I believe he heartily regrets having accepted the invitation made to him to leave the Havana. It is generally supposed that he has considerably augmented his already large fortune; but be his errors what they may, he is the only Mexican who could have created the forces he has managed to get together for the defence of his country."[1]

Santa Anna's career was, in truth, not over. He was destined to return once more, and to rule again over his countrymen; but those events lie beyond the scope of the present work.

The naval operations of the closing period of the war were not of any very serious importance; although, no doubt, they served to impress upon the Mexican government the fact of the irresistible sea-power of the United States, and especially the possibility of its use to effect an invasion from the Pacific seaboard.

After the capture of Tampico and Vera Cruz, which were turned over to be held by the army, little remained to be done by the navy on the Gulf coast. The other harbors were of slight importance, but they were either blockaded or occupied by sufficient detachments up to the close of the war. The harbors so held were Tuxpan; Alvarado; Coatzacoalcos, on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; Frontera, at the mouth of the Tabasco River; and Carmen, at the outlet of the Laguna de Términos, in the state of Campeche.[2]

The only affair in which organized opposition was met with was a second naval expedition up the Tabasco River undertaken by Commodore Perry in June, 1847.[3] About fifteen hundred men, bluejackets and marines, were taken up in light-draught vessels; eleven hundred of them were landed nine miles below the city of San Juan Bautista, the capital of the state of Tabasco; and after exchanging a few shots with the Mexican troops who were in or near the city, the

[1] Bankhead to Palmerston, Sept. 8, 1847, No. 86; *F. O. MSS.*
[2] Perry to Mason, Aug. 16, 1847; H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1233.
[3] See Perry's Report, with subreports; *ibid.*, 1209–1221.

place was occupied, the fortifications and powder-magazine were blown up, the artillery was removed, and all captured munitions of war were destroyed. The American loss was one man killed and five wounded.

Leaving a small and quite inadequate garrison in the city, Perry withdrew to his ships. A harassing guerilla warfare was soon afterward begun, and there was considerable sickness among the men.[1] The detachment was therefore withdrawn from San Juan Bautista to Frontera, at the mouth of the river, on the twenty-second of July—a movement which was hailed by the Mexicans as a victory.[2] The expedition had really been a blunder of Perry's, for it had been costly out of all proportion to its possible results.

"There is no particular object to be gained," he had written to the Navy Department in May, "by a second attack of the city [of San Juan Bautista], as we have quiet possession of the mouth of the river, which, with the occupation of Laguna, completely shuts the Tobascans from the sea."[3]

His real motive for subsequently undertaking the capture of the city is therefore not clear, though he explained that he wished to give the officers and men of two of his ships, which were about returning to the United States, "another opportunity of displaying their gallantry and zeal."[4]

On the Pacific coast the navy, early in January, 1847, was relieved from the necessity of co-operating with the army for the pacification and protection of California. The thoughts of the successive naval commanders were then naturally turned toward operations upon the coasts of Lower California and of the states of Sonora and Sinaloa, and even farther south on the Pacific. About the end of March the sloop-of-war *Portsmouth* seized the small harbors of San José, San Lucas, and La Paz near the southern extremity of Lower California; and she was followed by the sloop-of-war

[1] Reports of the skirmishes with the guerillas up and down the Tabasco River are printed in the same volume, 1221–1233.
[2] For the Mexican accounts see Roa Bárcena, 525–528.
[3] Perry to Mason, May 24, 1847; H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 1206.
[4] Same to same, June 8, 1847; *ibid.*, 1207.

*Cyane* and the frigate *Independence*, which established a blockade of Mazatlan.[1]

In the autumn of the same year a descent upon the Mexican coasts was made by a larger force. Detachments both of the army and navy were landed at various places. La Paz, the capital of Lower California, was occupied by about a hundred men of the first New York volunteers, and San José by a small force of marines. These detachments were not large enough to overawe the neighboring inhabitants, or to afford assistance to each other; and therefore for some months they had a series of arduous conflicts with irregular bodies of armed men, mainly raised in the neighborhood. But they managed to hold on to their posts until the close of the war.[2]

On October 16, 1847, the frigate *Congress*, accompanied by the sloop-of-war *Portsmouth*, arrived in the harbor of Guaymas in Sonora, and after they had shelled the fortifications for an hour the town surrendered.[3] A month later, the American seamen were compelled to abandon the town, which was threatened by a force which they estimated at three or four hundred men; but the blockade of the place continued, and the American flag was kept flying on an island in the harbor.[4]

In January, 1848, the town of San Blas was taken without opposition; a couple of schooners and "the custom-house boat," besides two small pieces of artillery, were carried off as prizes, and the town was then abandoned for want of a sufficient force to hold it permanently.[5]

A more important affair was the permanent occupation of Mazatlan, which was accomplished by the ships *Independence*, *Congress*, and *Cyane* on the morning of Novem-

[1] *Ibid.*, 1055–1059.

[2] *Ibid.*, 105–112, 1112–1119, 1123–1127, 1138–1149. The garrison at San José was helped at a critical moment by the arrival of two whale-ships, the *Magnolia* and the *Edward* of New Bedford, who arrived in the port on November 21, 1847, and frightened off the besieging guerillas.—(*Ibid.*, 1123–1126.) There was also some skirmishing at Loreto and Mulejé in Lower California.—(*Ibid.*, 1110.)

[3] *Ibid.*, 1075–1083.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1127–1129.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1101–1104, 1133–1137.

ber 11, 1847, the Mexican garrison making no resistance and abandoning the town. A large force was landed from the ships, but after an examination of the situation by Lieutenant Henry W. Halleck, of the United States engineers, who accompanied the squadron, it was thought that three hundred men would be a sufficient garrison. This force held the place until the close of the war without being attacked by the Mexicans. They had, however, a number of skirmishes in the neighborhood of the town, which were chiefly the results of scouting expeditions made by the American garrison.[1]

The last military operation of the war was the recapture of Chihuahua by an American force under the command of Colonel Sterling Price, who, it will be remembered, had been left in command of the troops in New Mexico. Early in February Price received information which led him to think that the Mexicans in Chihuahua contemplated taking the offensive, and he therefore collected in the town of El Paso a considerable number of troops, mostly mounted. Starting from El Paso on March 1, he marched rapidly and without meeting any opposition to a point near the Sacramento River (the scene of Doniphan's successful battle), where he was met by a flag of truce from General Trias, the military commander in the city of Chihuahua, who protested against the advance of the Americans "upon the ground that instructions had been received from the Mexican government suspending hostilities, as a treaty of peace had been concluded and signed by Commissioners on behalf of both governments." Price did not think the evidence adduced satisfactory, and he therefore pushed forward and arrived at the city with part of his men at nine o'clock on the evening of the seventh of March. He had marched about one hundred and forty miles in seven days, through a difficult country.

[1] *Ibid.*, 1089–1096, 1104–1110, 1120–1122. An interesting and humorous account of the blockade of Mazatlan by the U. S. S. *Independence* in May, 1847, and its occupation by the landing parties from that and other ships from November, 1847, to March, 1848, will be found in Lieutenant Wise's *Los Gringos*, 82–100, 142–202.

Price found that the city had been abandoned by the Mexican garrison, and he learned that General Trias had withdrawn about sixty miles farther south to Santa Cruz de Rosales. He thereupon, acting with great energy, obtained remounts for the larger part of his men that same night, and started the next morning in pursuit. He arrived at Santa Cruz at sunrise on the morning of the ninth, with two hundred and fifty cavalry, having marched sixty miles in twenty-four hours. Here he had an interview with General Trias in person, who asserted upon his honor that a treaty of peace had been signed, and expressed his belief that official confirmation of the fact would probably be received within three days. For this reason, and also because reinforcements of cavalry and artillery were expected, Price decided to blockade the town and not attempt any immediate attack upon the Mexican troops, who, as he believed, numbered over nine hundred.

On the morning of March 16 all of Price's expected reinforcements had arrived after remarkable marches. The battery of artillery, in particular, under Captain Love of the first dragoons—a company of which regiment were then acting as light artillery—had marched from the hot springs (*Ojo Caliente*) between 5 P. M. on March 12 and 5 A. M. on March 16, or three and one-half days. The distance is approximately one hundred and forty miles, which would make an average of forty miles a day. The cavalry during the last twenty-four hours had marched sixty miles.[1]

Price, having been thus reinforced, now lost no time in beginning an attack upon the Mexicans in Santa Cruz. During the course of the morning of March 16 he disposed his forces around the town and opened an artillery fire upon it. The defenders during the previous week had constructed barricades in the streets and had placed a number of small pieces of artillery in position, so that an assault was not easy. After a cannonading which lasted until the after-

[1] H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., Love's report, 126; Lane's report, 129. These officers overstate the distance, having apparently confused kilometres with miles.

noon, Price, at about four o'clock, advanced and attacked with his whole force; and after some vigorous street fighting the Mexicans surrendered "shortly after sundown." In addition to the prisoners, a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition fell into the hands of the Americans. The American loss in this action was four killed and nineteen wounded; while the loss of the Mexicans in killed and wounded cannot be stated.[1]

The most striking feature about this expedition of General Price's was the extraordinary rapidity of the march of the various detachments from El Paso to Santa Cruz, over a a country which possessed no good roads and where travelling was made difficult for long stretches by the entire absence of water. In other respects Price's conduct can hardly be commended. The object which he had in mind, namely, to forestall a hostile advance upon New Mexico from Chihuahua, was hardly commensurate with the risk and expense which he incurred. Distant as he was from all sources of information, it still seems impossible to doubt that he must have known that the principal operations of the war had been ended nearly six months before by the capture of the city of Mexico, and that therefore the information given him by General Trias of the signature of a treaty of peace was probably true. Even assuming that Price was justified in occupying the city of Chihuahua as a measure of self-defence, it is hard to see what justification he could possibly have for pursuing the Mexicans sixty miles farther south and for fighting a serious action with them after reiterated assurances that news of peace had been received. And he should have known that if he had been defeated, it might easily have led to a renewal of the war and an indefinite postponement of peace.

However, Price's rapid march and the complete triumph

[1] See Report from General Price and subreports, *ibid.*, 113–136. He gives no separate estimate of the Mexican wounded, but states that their losses (apparently only those killed) were 236. This is obviously impossible, unless it is meant to include the prisoners, besides those killed and wounded. The Mexican accounts give no figures. See Ros Bárcena, 535–537; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 397–401.

over Trias—which gave the Americans the practical control of the whole state of Chihuahua—must, as it turned out, have had a moral influence in bringing about the ratification of the treaty of peace. In connection with the naval operations on the Pacific coast of the republic it produced the impression of that sort of constricting and crushing force which we have been taught to regard as the peculiar characteristic of sea power.

Thus ended the war, which had begun less than two years before, and which had resulted in the occupation by the American forces of the capital of Mexico, many of its principal towns, and much more than one-half of its territory. There can be no doubt that the war would have been far shorter in duration and far less costly in human life if the American army had been in a more complete state of preparation. Its entire lack of any intelligence department, and of any systematic method of increasing the army by means of volunteers, was the first and most obvious cause of its palpable shortcomings. The volunteers were enlisted, organized, clothed, equipped, and drilled haphazard; and although they subsequently gave an excellent account of themselves, no one can possibly doubt that they would have been far more efficient and could have been put far earlier in the field if the work could have been undertaken in accordance with some predetermined plan.

Another very obvious cause of delay was the extreme slowness of Congress, after the first impulse of enthusiasm was spent, in voting the necessary measures for reinforcing and supplying the armies in the field. The violent discussions which went on over the origin of the war served not to shorten but to prolong the existence of a state of things with which the opponents of the administration found so much fault.

The military results were undoubtedly striking from their completeness and from the unbroken success of the American armies; but it cannot be denied that these were in large measure due to the weakness and inefficiency of the Mexican

troops. The material upon which the Mexicans had to rely was not good in itself. The native races were not warlike by nature, and probably not much better fighting men than the Bengalis, of whom the British never have been able to make efficient soldiers. Nevertheless, they possessed many qualities, such as patience and endurance, which, under better leadership, might at least have made them formidable for the purpose of defending fortified positions. But one great weakness of the Mexican republic was that it had few good officers. None of the commanders, with the very important exception of Santa Anna, gave evidence of either energy or capacity; and some of them, like General Valencia, proved not only incapable but cowardly. The officers of lower rank also seem to have been, on the whole, extremely indifferent. General Grant, in a passage already quoted, speaks of their want of endurance in action, and there is no record of any feat of energy or enterprise on their part.

At the bottom, however, of all the difficulties of the Mexican army was the want of money honestly and economically employed. The country was poor, and the money necessary for keeping up a military establishment, thoroughly armed and equipped, with solid fortifications and well-drilled men, would have exhausted all the scanty resources which the government of Mexico was able to command, even if the money could have been applied upon a proper system of disbursement and accounting. Mexico was not wanting in natural resources, and under more capable and peaceable administrations might have been able to command the means for keeping a small but efficient army in the field; but from the time of its independence down to the period of the war it had been so constantly misgoverned and had been the scene of so much domestic disturbance that it was at no time able to offer serious opposition to any foreign invader.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

When Santa Anna abandoned the presidential office and set out to play his last desperate stake at Puebla, he issued, as we have seen, a decree directing the president of the Supreme Court to discharge the duties of President of the republic, associating with himself Generals Herrera and Alcorta, and further directing that the seat of government should be at Querétaro until Congress should decide otherwise.[1]

Manuel de la Peña y Peña, then the presiding judge of the Supreme Court, was an elderly man of unblemished character who had filled many great offices.[2] He was generally believed to be favorable to an early peace with the United States. He had always been in favor of negotiations for a settlement of the questions between the two countries; and, although as Secretary of Relations under Herrera's short Presidency in 1845 he had felt himself obliged to invent reasons for not receiving Slidell, he would certainly have welcomed him if the public opinion of that time had permitted. He was reputed a learned lawyer. Both Bankhead and Trist described him as a "timid" man; but the adjective was ill chosen. Peña, though cautious and slow, was by no means devoid of courage. Once his mind was made up, he could face with calmness and determination whatever

[1] This decree was assumed to be authorised by the law of April 20, 1847, granting "extraordinary powers"; but as Congress and President Santa Anna had both declared that law superseded by the readoption of the Constitution of 1824 and the passage of the *Acta de Reformas*, it is hard to see how any action under it could be justified.

[2] He was born March 10, 1789, and was therefore not quite fifty-nine years of age when Santa Anna resigned. He was first made a judge of the Supreme Court of Mexico in 1824, at the age of thirty-five.

dangers were to be met. Certainly he was no heaven-born leader; but what Mexico then sorely needed was not so much a genius as an honest, plain man who had enough wisdom and self-abnegation to see the facts of her situation as they really were, and to guide her into the paths of safety.

It was generally doubted at first whether Peña would venture to face the labors and dangers of the Presidency; and characteristically he kept the country for several days in suspense. He had received, when near Toluca (about thirty-five miles west of the city of Mexico), an official copy of Santa Anna's decree of resignation, and he wrote on September 22 acknowledging receipt; but it was not until the twenty-seventh that he announced his decision to accept. On that day he issued a proclamation, dated at Toluca, notifying the governors of the several states of his elevation to the Presidency and the appointment of Don Luis de la Rosa, a well-known advocate of peace, as Minister of Relations and temporarily in charge of all the other ministries.[1] There was no mention in the proclamation of Generals Herrera or Alcorta, who had been associated with him in Santa Anna's decree, and by this one stroke Peña was thought to have declared his independence. Santa Anna's decree he treated as so much waste paper. He proclaimed himself President, not by virtue of the decree, but by virtue of the Constitution of 1824, which (in article 97) provided that, in the event of the President's inability to act, the supreme executive power should be vested in the president of the Supreme Court of Justice and two persons to be selected by a majority vote of the council of government.[2] If the law of April 20, 1847, was no longer in force, he was plainly right; and neither

[1] Trist, who at this time must have had access to good sources of information, asserted that "Peña wished Cuevas, who under the stimulus of letters from Couto was chiefly instrumental in dragging P. forth, to come in as Secretary of State," but that Cuevas had demonstrated the expediency of his remaining out of the cabinet.—(Trist to Buchanan, Oct. 1, 1847; *State Dept., MSS.*) Cuevas had long been known as an advocate of peace with Texas.

[2] Dublan y Lozano, I, 728; and *Acta de Reformas*, Art. 15; *ibid.*, V, 276. The council of government never selected any one to act with Peña y Peña, and he was, no doubt, justified, under the Constitution, in acting alone until his associates were duly designated by the council.

Herrera nor Alcorta publicly questioned Peña's assumption of power or sought to share it.

Peña's next act was to issue the order dated October 7, 1847, by which Santa Anna was relieved from command and ordered before a court of inquiry. This second display of firmness further strengthened Peña's position; for although Santa Anna blustered and talked of his right to resume the Presidency at any time before his resignation was accepted by Congress, he in fact yielded.

Having thus disposed of Santa Anna, President Peña set out from Toluca and arrived on the twelfth of October at Querétaro, where a few members of Congress had already assembled and where General Herrera and the remains of the army (half of his force having deserted en route) also appeared. Herrera (who professed to be ill) shortly afterward resigned his command, and General Mora y Villamil, having been appointed Minister of War on October 21, a beginning was made of a reorganization of the army by creating on paper three divisions under those three unlucky old generals, Filisola, Alvarez, and Bustamante.

The Congress had already been summoned to meet at Querétaro on the fifth of October, but no quorum appeared at that time, or until the second of November. The continued failure to procure a quorum was due probably in part to the disturbed state of the country, in part to the inability of the federal government to pay (as was customary) the travelling expenses of members, in part to the unwillingness of many members to be mixed up in any dealing with the Americans, and in part to uncertainties as to the state of the law. Under the *Acta de Reformas* of May 18, 1847, the general legislative authority had been declared to be vested in the constituent Congress until the new houses of Congress—to be thereafter elected—should actually assemble.[1] By another law passed June 3, 1847, the elections for President and members of Congress were regulated, and were to begin on August 29 and continue through the various intermediate stages until October 1, 1847.[2] But the

[1] *Ibid.*, V, 278.

[2] *Ibid.*, V, 231.

occupation of a large part of the country by the American armies had put a stop to the meetings of the electoral bodies, so that the new houses of Congress were not in fact constituted. It seemed, therefore, to be clear that the constituent Congress (chosen in the latter months of 1846) was still the only body having legislative powers; but at the same time steps were taken by the government to secure the election of new federal authorities. A decree bearing date October 19, 1847, was issued by the acting President which recited the failure to hold elections in several states and commanded—by virtue of the extraordinary powers granted under the law of April 20, 1847—that all the necessary steps be taken and the final selections of members made within ten weeks after the decree had been published in the capital of each of such states.[1]

At about the same time a circular was sent to the governors of the several states, inviting them to meet at Querétaro on the tenth of November. The meeting was accordingly held, although only a small number of governors actually attended;[2] but the mere summons appears to have spurred the jealous Congress into assembling, for it was thought that with the support of the governors the federal executive might venture on a *coup d'état* and declare himself a dictator. No one any longer thought Peña "timid."

Meanwhile, the President and his supporters were working wonders in the way of establishing a settled government capable of entering into engagements with foreign powers. The firmness of Peña in dealing with Santa Anna contributed not a little to the general acceptance of his administration. Nevertheless, some of the states declined to support him, and passed laws declaring that the federation was dissolved and that they "resumed" their independence—a course which, if persisted in, could only have resulted in anarchy.

[1] *Ibid.*, V, 297. How the law of April 20, 1847, could be resuscitated for the purpose of this decree is not apparent; but the decree was fully justified by Art. 4 of the act of June 3, which expressly authorised the government to fix new dates for "repeating or verifying elections" in any invaded states or territories.

[2] Seven states were represented.—(Bancroft's *Mexico*, V, 535.)

There were also technical doubts raised as to Peña's title to the Presidency, though if he were not to be recognised all government in the country was at an end.

"At first," as the American diplomatic agent wrote to his government, "it seemed that nothing could stay the swelling tide, and that the whole country was soon to be overwhelmed by it, past all redemption; but, through efforts the most active and unremitting on the part of a few men, whose characters commanded confidence, congenial spirits to their own were suddenly roused and incited to similar exertions, at various centres of action throughout the country; and although, for a time, the most sanguine among them almost despaired of success, they have finally triumphed in obtaining a general recognition of the provisional authority of Peña y Peña; a triumph which, considering the serious constitutional objections which existed to his recognition, and the number of factions at work to prevent it, is a subject of just wonder. . . .

"For some days past the intelligence from Querétaro has been more and more encouraging, by every fresh arrival. No doubt exists now as to an early meeting of Congress; although some fears are entertained that the intrigues in which Almonte has been engaged there, to get himself elected President *ad interim*, may prove successful. This would be a fatal blow to the Peace party; the leaders of whom have no sympathies with him. . . . A very slender estimate, too, is put upon his abilities; the cunning and craftiness of the Indian being all that he gets credit for. In a word, he is of the Santa Anna species; though infinitely the inferior of that prototype, who is, beyond question a man of very extraordinary powers, singular quickness of apprehension, deep sagacity, and most fascinating address. Upon these points, there is no difference of opinion here, even among those who hold him in utter detestation.

"Letters are pouring in upon the deputies at Querétaro, urging them to make peace without loss of time; the writers being generally men who have hitherto been among the most vehement in denouncing every idea of the sort. The change is owing chiefly, almost entirely, to the downfall of Santa Anna."[1]

It will thus be seen that before Congress met, the interim government at Querétaro had really managed to establish itself—in an imperfect fashion, to be sure—as a government *de facto*. It was now recognised by the governors of many

[1] Trist to Buchanan, Oct. 25, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.* Extracts printed in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 205-212.

of the states, by the bishops and other clergy, by the remains of the army, and by representatives of foreign countries.

Under these circumstances Trist, whose patience must have been much tried by his enforced idleness during the weeks that had elapsed since Scott had entered the capital, decided that the time had come when he might endeavor to renew peace negotiations; and on October 20 he sent a paper (through the British legation) addressed to Rosa, the Minister of Relations.[1] This document, although sent late in October, was dated September 7, 1847, and professed to have been intended as a reply to the last communication of the former negotiators. According to Trist, the paper had not been delivered, as he had expected it would be, on the day of its date, owing to the termination of the armistice on that day. It did not directly offer to renew the former discussion, but was in the main a verbose and not unskilful attempt to answer the Mexican arguments in relation to the territory between the Rio Grande and the Nueces. However, as the British chargé d'affaires wrote home, the only immediate importance of the document was that it showed Trist's willingness to go on with the former negotiations.

"I much fear, however," Thornton added, "that no Mexican Government will have strength sufficient to resist the baleful influence of the innumerable intrigues which, in spite of the present melancholy condition of the country, are still being carried on by many of her unpatriotic citizens for their own personal ends."[2]

Rosa, however, was not deterred by these "innumerable intrigues" from replying to Trist. He dwelt on the earnest desire of the government of Mexico to end the war, "the calamities of which now bear heavily on this republic, and the consequences of which, sooner or later, will make themselves felt by the United States of America," and he prom-

[1] Same to same, Oct. 31, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.* Extracts in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 212.

[2] Thornton to Palmerston, Oct. 29, 1847, No. 4; *F. O. MSS.* Bankhead, the British minister, had left the city of Mexico on his way home on October 19, on sick leave. Doyle, the secretary of legation, had been absent in England on leave, but was now on his way back; and therefore until his return, about the middle of December, Thornton was accredited as chargé d'affaires.

ised the appointment within a few days of "commissioners to continue the negotiations for peace."[1] The reason why commissioners were not at once appointed was, of course, because it was hoped that Congress would soon be able to command a quorum and elect a President *ad interim*, pursuant to the Constitution and the *Acta de Reformas*, and, in fact, the sessions of Congress did begin two days after the date of Rosa's note.

In the struggle of parties in Congress and throughout the country, the *moderados*—the followers of Herrera and Anaya and Cuevas and Peña—proved to be for the moment the strongest. They were, first of all, opposed to Santa Anna and his kind. They longed for peace, and they hoped for an orderly and steady development of the country under its then existing institutions.

Probably the next most numerous group was the remnant of the *puros*, the "pure" republican or radical party. Fundamentally anti-clerical, they looked with undisguised admiration at the institutions of the United States and the separation of church and state; and some of them even went so far as to profess the belief that it would be better for Mexico to be absorbed in the great republic, rather than to attempt to continue a separate existence, which had proved so unfortunate. For this reason they opposed any treaty of peace. They wished the American troops to overrun the whole country, or even to take and keep it.[2]

There were, of course, still others who opposed the peace policy of the *moderados* for entirely different reasons from those put forward by the *puros*. It was argued that a petty war might be successfully waged by guerrilleros in the parts of Mexico which had as yet been untouched by invasion.

[1] Rosa to Trist, Oct. 31, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 227.

[2] "I have had many interesting interviews with intelligent Mexicans on the political relations of this country and my own. . . . They are all of one party —the Puros, so-called—and do not hesitate to express a wish that the troops of the United States may hold this country until the Mexican army is annihilated, in order that a proper civil government may be securely established. They are opposed to payment of money by the United States to the government of Mexico, saying it would only corrupt those in power."—(Hitchcock, 309; Nov. 14, 1847.)

The wealthy states of San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Michoacan, and Oaxaca had thus far been left in peace; and in the barren mountains of the centre of the republic and in the tropical heat of the *tierra caliente* the strongest American forces would wage an almost hopeless and certainly a most harassing and costly warfare. Moreover, it was well known that in many sections of the United States there was the strongest dislike for the existing contest, and it was hoped that a sturdy refusal by Mexico to yield would result in the invader's abandoning his conquests in disgust. The story of Napoleon's adventure in Spain had not been forgotten.

Another group opposed to peace were the Santanistas, who hoped that the next turn of fortune's wheel might once more restore their leader to the place of the distribution of patronage. Santa Anna's talents could be exercised only in troubled times, so that a programme like Guizot's, offering only peace and bourgeois prosperity, promised nothing for faithful followers.

Finally, the monarchists were opposed to anything which seemed likely to insure the permanency of the republic. There seem to have been few, if any, avowed monarchists in Congress; but efforts were making to establish the party throughout the country, and their potential strength was enough to disquiet politicians. Ex-President Paredes, now openly advocating the policy of putting a foreign prince on the throne of Mexico, had returned to the country early in August, and late in September had offered his services to the government, which were declined. Many stories were in circulation as to his activities in Europe. It was reported that Louis Philippe and Prince Metternich had expressed themselves favorably; that offers of the crown had been made to the Duc de Montpensier, to an Austrian prince, to a Coburg prince; and that the only thing needed was satisfactory evidence of local support in Mexico. It was evident that these tales were gross exaggerations; and Trist, writing home, said of Paredes that, "although one of the honestest and bravest men they have ever had, he is a fool and a drunk-

ard—certainly not the sort of person who would be selected by the European courts to carry on an intrigue of this sort."[1]

The immediate interest, when Congress met, was, however, in men and not in measures. For more than a week "the various groups of the Congress struggled without rest and without fatigue for the success of their respective candidates for President *ad interim*";[2] but finally, on the eleventh of November, 1847, a bare quorum being present, General Anaya was elected to hold office until January 8, 1848. It was a decided triumph for the *moderados*. Anaya himself was nothing; but he stood for peace, and he at once made Peña y Peña his Minister of Relations and continued Mora y Villamil as his Minister of War. Congress could do no more, and it adjourned about November 17, after passing a vote of thanks to Peña for his services in taking charge of the government "and preserving the legal centre of union after the loss of the capital."[3]

At the same time the thinly attended meeting of governors was being held at Querétaro. It was addressed by the Minister of War, who explained that the governors had been called together simply for advice and information, so that the cabinet would not necessarily feel bound to follow the advice the conference might offer; and he then laid before them a detailed account of the military and financial condition of the country. The total Mexican force then under arms was 8,109 men, scattered throughout the whole country, the largest detachment, that at Querétaro, numbering less than three thousand.[4] Against this he estimated that the American troops actually in Mexico amounted to

[1] Trist to Buchanan, Oct. 25, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 211. The foregoing summary of the state of parties in Mexico at the beginning of November, 1847, is mainly derived from Trist's voluminous despatches, and the despatches from Bankhead and Thornton of the British legation. All are in substantial agreement, which is not surprising, seeing that Thornton and Trist were on the most confidential terms.

[2] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 701.

[3] Law of Nov. 13, 1847; Dublan y Lozano, V, 306.

[4] In Querétaro there were reported to be 2,032 men; in the state of Mexico (Toluca), under Alvarez, 1,282; in San Luis Potosí, 823. There were not 700 men in any other single place.

43,059 men, of whom 32,000 (including the garrisons of Tampico and Vera Cruz) were under Scott's command.[1] But Mexico had also to deal with other difficulties and other enemies. Some of the states were opposing the existing government; Yucatan had long before proclaimed her neutrality and had taken no part in the war; the custom-houses and some of the largest cities were in the invaders' hands; the greater part of the artillery (nearly six hundred guns) and most of the small-arms and ammunition and other supplies for the army had been captured or destroyed. National defence was no longer possible, and the Americans were free to march from one end of Mexico to another. In short, without their expressing any final decision, the conclusion of the government was plainly indicated, namely, that peace must be made at any cost.

The conference of the governors continued until the middle of December, when they adopted a resolution declaring they would sustain the federal government in the performance of its duties to the extent and in the manner prescribed in the Constitution; and with this cryptic utterance Anaya and his cabinet had to rest content.[2] The members of the government by this time had definitely made up their minds to negotiate. On November 22, 1847, a month after Trist had offered to resume the interrupted discussions of September, Peña y Peña, as Minister of Relations, addressed a note to Trist to inform him that President Anaya had appointed commissioners, "which appointment the president of the Supreme Court of Justice did not make on account of the temporary character of his government." Of the persons chosen as commissioners, two had served in the same capacity in September—Don Bernardo Couto and Don

[1] These figures were remarkably accurate, and were probably furnished by Scott. The estimates of the adjutant-general of the U. S. as of Nov. 30, 1847, showed 43,536 men in the field (including recruits *en route*) of whom 32,156 were under Scott. His effective strength was, of course, much less.—(See Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 72.)

[2] For the governors' conference, see Roa Bárcena, 567–580; *Memoria presentada por el ministerio de la guerra á la junta de los Escmos. Sres. gobernadores de los Estados*, etc., Nov. 19, 1847, in *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 24–31. Trist to Buchanan, Dec. 20, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 268–271.

Miguel Atristain. General Herrera being ill and General Mora y Villamil having become Minister of War, the President had appointed General Manuel Rincon and Don Luis Gonzago Cuevas to take their places.[1] These gentlemen had been requested to come to Querétaro to receive their instructions, and they would then communicate with Mr. Trist, "in order that, upon proper conditions, the conferences which remain pending may be continued, and may lead to the happy results of an honorable and useful peace."[2]

This note was forwarded through Thornton, of the British legation, who had just reached Querétaro, and it was received by Trist in the city of Mexico on the twenty-fourth of November. Agreeable as the official notification of a Mexican readiness to treat for peace must have been, Trist's first emotions were undoubtedly those of astonishment rather than of gratification; for the Minister of Relations had despatched his note after receiving the fullest information that Trist had been ordered to return home at once, and that his powers had been revoked.

It will be remembered that Buchanan had written to Trist on the sixth of October, directing him to break off any negotiations with Mexican representatives in which he might be engaged, and to return to Washington without delay—directions which were reiterated with angry emphasis in further instructions on the twenty-fifth of the same month.[3] As the roads between Vera Cruz and the capital were still very far from safe, these two important despatches were sent from Vera Cruz by the same convoy and arrived in Mexico together, coming into Trist's hands on the sixteenth of November.

It so happened that Thornton was then on the eve of starting for Querétaro. The British Foreign Office some time

[1] Rincon declined to serve, and his place was not filled. Cuevas was well qualified for the place. He was a man of ability and had twice acted as Minister of Relations; first in 1837, and again under Herrera from Dec., 1844, to Sept., 1845.

[2] Peña y Peña to Trist, Nov. 22, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 99.

[3] Buchanan to Trist, Oct. 6 and 25, 1847; *ibid.*, 91, 94.

before had instructed Bankhead that in case the Mexican government were to establish itself outside of the capital, the legation must follow it; but the instructions had not been obeyed during Peña's temporary tenure of office. Upon the assembling of Congress and their selection of Anaya for the Presidency there seemed to be no further occasion for delay, and Thornton had arranged to start on his journey on the seventeenth of November. On the previous evening Trist called and read him Buchanan's instructions, just received, of which Thornton took and transmitted to his government very full notes.

"Mr. Trist," Thornton reported, "begged me on my arrival at Querétaro confidentially to inform the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations of his recall, and to state to him that if the Mexican Government would immediately make some proposition which he could take to Washington with him, he would defer the official announcement of his recall for a few days. I had not been in this City half an hour when Señor de la Peña y Peña called upon me, with the intention, as he said, of begging me to transmit an official Note from him to Mr. Trist, Copy and Translation of which I have the honour to enclose, announcing the Nomination of Commissioners to renew Negotiations. On my giving Señor de la Peña y Peña Mr. Trist's Message, his Excellency stated that under present circumstances, it was impossible for him to adopt any other mode; that Mr. Trist, having full powers to do so, had expressed his readiness to renew Negotiations; that this offer had been accepted and Commissioners named, through whom alone propositions could be made. His Excellency further begged me to accompany his official Note with a private letter from myself to Mr. Trist, imploring him to take into consideration the difficulties with which the Government were surrounded from the Army and the war party, and their evident desire to make peace, proved by the formation of such a cabinet as then existed. With which request I complied."[1]

To the Mexican commissioners Peña also wrote, arguing that it was too late for Trist to withdraw after he had written offering to reopen negotiations, and when his offer had been accepted and commissioners had been named to meet him.

[1] Thornton to Palmerston, Nov. 26, 1847, No. 14; *F. O. MSS.*

"It is clear," continued the letter, "that the late revocation of Mr. Trist's powers, not known until now, and not yet officially communicated to the Mexican government, cannot have the effect of invalidating or cancelling what has been agreed upon in due and proper time. . . . That which is done by an agent with adequate powers prior to their revocation, or prior to his receipt of notice of revocation, is valid and in full force, more especially where there has been a positive acceptance by the other party. These principles, so well known and so well founded in natural reason and in every system of law, though they may not go so far as to compel Mr. Trist to conclude a treaty with us, assuming his powers have been revoked, do certainly require his government to continue the negotiations begun in due season by their own agent and accepted forthwith by our government."[1]

For several days therefore Couto and his associates reasoned with Trist and urged him not to leave Mexico. Every argument that could be drawn from the situation of the two countries, every artful flattery that could be devised, was employed. Scott himself was on the side of the Mexicans. He urged Trist to stay and finish the good work he had begun, and he also encouraged the Mexican commissioners by the expression of a confident belief that any treaty Trist might sign would be duly ratified at Washington.[2] Trist, however, for several days remained firm. On November 24 he wrote officially to Peña y Peña announcing his recall and the revocation of his powers, and he informed the State Department that he would start for home as soon as Scott could conveniently send a train to Vera Cruz.[3]

[1] Peña y Peña to Couto, Nov. 24, 1847; Ros Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 583. This author had access to copies of the private correspondence between Peña and Couto, letters of Don Luis de la Rosa, communications both official and private between the Mexican government and its commissioners, drafts of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, notes on various points that came up in the course of the negotiations, etc. These papers were collected by Señor Couto with the intention of writing an account of the negotiations, but they were never published.—(*Ibid.*, 580, *note.*)

[2] Scott's *Autobiography*, 576. It seems likely that both Scott and Trist believed that the administration now wished for much more of Mexico than California and New Mexico, and would therefore be much vexed at the signing of a treaty on the lines of Trist's original instructions, but that public opinion would force its ratification in spite of the administration.

[3] Trist to Peña, Nov. 24, 1847; Trist to Buchanan, Nov. 27, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 231, 230.

On the fourth of December Scott wrote to the War Department that "Mr. Trist will go down with the next train."[1]

But before Scott wrote, Trist had changed his mind and had finally determined to remain in Mexico. His decision was verbally announced to the Mexican commissioners on the third of December.

"Mr. Trist has given us to understand," Couto reported, "that he is disposed to assume the responsibility of a treaty which he can take with him to Washington, where, in his opinion, it will be approved by the Senate. He is willing, if there is an assurance that the negotiation proceeds on the basis of the territorial demands of the United States, to withdraw the note in which he gave notice of the revocation of his powers, and to answer your communication in regard to the appointment of commissioners by saying that, on his part, he has no objection to continue the negotiation broken off in consequence of the events of September. He has informed us, apparently with complete frankness and good faith, that he and General Scott are sincerely desirous of peace, and that a continuance of the war will end by ruining Mexico and by producing grave complications in the internal affairs of the United States."[2]

On the next day after this announcement Trist wrote to Thornton at Querétaro confirming the news, and giving the reasons for his change of purpose.

"I am now resolved, and committed," he wrote, "to carry home with me a treaty of peace, if the Mexican government feel strong enough to venture upon making one on the basis, as regards boundary, of the project originally presented by me. . . . If they feel able to make and carry through a treaty on this basis, it would be utterly idle to talk or think for an instant of any other, and I cannot listen to a single word on the subject; let them say the word and the treaty shall be made. If they do not feel thus able, let them surrender at once to the Puros, and dismiss forever all thoughts of a treaty. . . .

"I should not now make the offer but for my clear and perfect conviction on these three points: *First*, that peace is still the desire of my government: *Secondly*, that if the present opportunity be not seised *at once*, all chance for making a treaty *at all* will be lost for an indefinite period—probably forever: *Thirdly*, that this is the utmost point to which the Mexican government can by any possibility venture. . . .

[1] Scott to Marcy, Dec. 4, 1847; *Ibid.*, 144.
[2] Couto to Peña y Peña, Dec. 3, 1847; Roa Bárcena, 500.

"What is my line of duty to my government and my country in this most extraordinary position in which I find myself? Knowing, as I do, that peace is the earnest wish of both, is it, *can* it be my duty to allow this last chance for peace to be lost, by my conforming to a determination of that government, taken with reference to a supposed state of things in this country entirely the reverse of that which actually exists? Upon full reflection, I have come to the conclusion that my duty is, to pursue the opposite course; and upon this conclusion I have taken my stand."[1]

Two days later Trist sent off a more than usually long and involved despatch to the State Department, in which he enclosed a copy of his letter to Thornton, defiantly announced his intention to disobey orders, and developed his reasons for doing so. Incidentally, he also discussed the character of General Pillow (just then Scott's *bête noire*), the wisdom of Scott in making the armistice in August, the folly and wickedness of the Washington *Union* (Polk's newspaper organ), the question of Santa Anna's sincerity in the former negotiations, the boundary of Texas, and the President's weakness in trusting Pillow—"an intriguer of unimaginable and incomprehensible baseness."[2] It is unnecessary to analyze this tedious production. It is enough to say that its tone was extremely insolent toward the American administration, and that there ran through it "the thinly disguised innuendo that the President had changed his plans and now favored the annexation of all Mexico."[3]

The Mexican government having thus succeeded in persuading the American agent to remain and treat for peace, it might have been supposed that they would have been eager to seize the favorable moment and endeavor to get him committed to definite terms; but *mañana* was again the

[1] Trist to Thornton, Dec. 4, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 266–268. Italics in original. The printed copy omits the name of the person to whom the letter was written, but the archives in Washington and London show that it was addressed to Thornton.

[2] Trist to Buchanan, Dec. 6, 1847; *State Dept. MSS.* The greater part of this despatch is printed in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 231–266.

[3] J. S. Reeves, "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo," *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, X, 309–324; and see "The United States and Mexico, 1847–1848," by E. G. Bourne, *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, V, 491–502.

word, and the government found new pretexts for delay. When the subject was discussed by Thornton with Peña y Peña the latter explained that the Mexican commissioners must be confirmed by the Senate, or, during its recess, by the council of government, before they could act; that he was convinced the then existing council would not confirm the commissioners, especially Cuevas, but that the new Congress would meet in January, and he professed himself sure of their approval. He had therefore written to the three commissioners, in the city of Mexico,

"desiring them to assure Mr. Trist that on the installation of the new Congress, he should immediately demand their sanction for the new commissioners, and would then give them instructions on the basis proposed by Mr. Trist, if the latter considered himself justified in waiting till that time."

Thornton expressed himself as very much afraid that this delay would be fatal.[1] And Couto wrote that confirmation by the Senate in such a case was unnecessary, as was shown by the practice theretofore followed.[2]

For about three weeks the doubts professed by Peña y Peña prevented all formal negotiations, although Trist privately met the Mexican commissioners from time to time, and some progress was made toward coming to an understanding. Indeed, on December 29 Trist wrote that, "ac-

[1] Thornton to Palmerston, Dec. 11, 1847, No. 21; *F. O. MSS.*

[2] Ros Bárcena, 588. A similar question has been several times discussed in the United States, one of the cases in point being that of Trist himself. A number of instances involving the power of the President of the United States to appoint, without the advice and consent of the Senate, agents for the purpose of conducting negotiations with foreign countries, are collected in Moore's *International Law Digest*, IV, 452–456. The subject was debated at some length in the Senate in 1888 in connection with the unratified Bayard-Chamberlain Fisheries Treaty, which was negotiated by the Secretary of State assisted by Messrs. Angell and Putnam, who then held no official position and had not been nominated to or confirmed by the Senate. The soundest doctrine seems to be that stated by Senator Sherman. "The President of the United States has the power to propose treaties, subject to ratification by the Senate, and he may use such agencies as he chooses to employ—except that he cannot take any money from the Treasury to pay these agents without an appropriation by law. . . . In my judgment, he has a right to use such means as are necessary to bring about any treaty."—(Cong. Record, Aug. 7, 1888, p. 7287.)

cording to every probability, a treaty will be signed in the course of a week from this time," and that it would be ratified by the Mexican Congress early in January, although he added that "the inability of the government to command even the small sum required to provide for the travelling expenses of the members" made the presence of a quorum doubtful.[1] Meanwhile a new negotiator had appeared on the scene in the person of Mr. Percy W. Doyle, the British secretary of legation.

Doyle, who had been absent in England on leave, reached Vera Cruz early in December, was escorted up by a troop of Louisiana volunteer cavalry, and arrived in the city of Mexico on the eleventh of December. Two days later he wrote to the Foreign Office an account of the state of the negotiations.

"Señor Atristain, one of the Commissioners," he reported, "called on me as soon as I reached Mexico, to say that he was about to start for Querétaro on a Secret Mission to persuade the General Government to authorise him and his colleagues to meet Mr. Trist, who had declared to him, that he will be obliged, in the case of the failure of this attempt, to leave the country, and that in such a case no proposition for Peace will be received except at Washington.

"This matter has been kept most secret by both Parties. Señor Atristain begged me to remain here for the present, as he said, that should he succeed in obtaining leave to treat with Mr. Trist I should be of great use in smoothing down difficulties which might otherwise prove most serious."

Doyle further wrote that he had consented to remain at the city of Mexico instead of going on to Querétaro, and that Atristain had then asked whether it was true that England would interfere to support Mexico, and whether she would guarantee the execution of any treaty that might be made with the United States. Reports, he said, were current to that effect, and it was supposed Doyle would have brought new instructions from England; but Doyle explained that Lord Palmerston had merely told him to use his good offices whenever called upon to do so, and that "I could not inter-

[1] Trist to Buchanan, Dec. 29, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 275.

fere in any other way, nor could I think for an instant of offering any sort of guarantee on the part of Great Britain."[1]

The ideas of British interposition to shield Mexico in the last resort and of a British guarantee of the treaty of peace were not novel. Of the first, Peña had spoken to Thornton in November, saying that the greatest difficulty which the government had had to encounter was the confidence of the war party that Great Britain would come to the aid of Mexico, a notion which Thornton did his best to dispel by writing a note to Peña in which he explained the determination of her Majesty's government to observe the strictest neutrality.[2]

The other notion, that Great Britain might consent to guarantee the due observance of a treaty of peace with the United States, had been brought forward in writing in the course of the August negotiations, though Trist had left it unanswered.[3] The subject was also submitted to Lord Palmerston on September 21, 1847, in a note from Señor Mora, then Mexican minister in London; to which Palmerston replied on October 7, declining to give such a guarantee. The same question was again put verbally to Thornton by Couto in October, and Thornton at that time answered that he believed the British government would not be inclined to enter into such an engagement, and expressed his "firm conviction" that the United States government would not agree to it.[4] Thornton's reply was, later on, approved by Palmerston.

"It is highly improbable," the latter wrote, "that the United States would be a party to an application to Great Britain to guarantee a Treaty between the United States and Mexico, and without such an application from both parties such an interference of Great Britain would be tantamount to an alliance with one party contingently against the other."[5]

[1] Doyle to Palmerston, Dec. 13, 1847, No. 3; *F. O. MSS.*
[2] Thornton to Palmerston, Nov. 26, 1847, No. 14; *ibid.*
[3] See page 515, above.
[4] Thornton to Palmerston, Oct. 29, 1847, No. 7; *ibid.*
[5] Palmerston to Thornton, Dec. 28, 1847, No. 2; *ibid.*

Couto still hoped to find Doyle less positive than Thornton, but Doyle was able to produce a copy of Palmerston's reply to Mora of October 7, which was decisive.[1]

Two or three weeks after Doyle's interview with Couto, Peña y Peña, under pressure from all sides, finally yielded his scruples, and instructed the commissioners to go on with the negotiations; and by that time four points were thoroughly understood:

1. Mexico was to surrender Texas with the Rio Grande as a boundary, and also all of New Mexico and Upper California.[2]

2. Great Britain would lend its good offices, but would not otherwise intervene.

3. Great Britain would not be a party to the treaty or guarantee its performance.

4. The United States would pay a pecuniary compensation to Mexico.

Nevertheless, the instructions sent to the Mexican commissioners on December 30, on their face, ignored this understanding, and began with suggestions which, says Roa Bárcena, were undoubtedly made as mere matters of form (*por exigencias de forma*). The commissioners, in the first place, were to endeavor to procure the immediate retirement of the American army north of the Rio Grande and the Gila River. In the next place, the American pretensions with respect to Mexico were to be passed upon by a congress of representatives of all the American nations, by whose decision the

[1] Doyle to Palmerston (postscript), Dec. 13, 1847, No. 3; *ibid.* The Mexican commissioners did, however, try to get Trist to join them in requesting the British government to guarantee the execution of the treaty, but Trist "declared that his Government would not hear of such a thing"; and, according to Couto, Trist always showed "great irritation whenever that question was entered upon."—(Doyle to Palmerston, March 14, 1848; *ibid.*)

[2] The words "New Mexico and California" were understood by all parties to include the whole of northern Mexico from Texas to the Pacific Ocean, although the boundaries of the two provinces had never been defined and the territory between their acknowledged jurisdictions was uninhabited and all but unknown. See Cardinal Goodwin, "The Question of the Eastern Boundary of California in the Convention of 1849," *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 227–229, where the author refers to several maps giving widely differing boundaries. Disturnell's map of Mexico (published in 1847) was, however, expressly accepted as authority by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

United States must agree to abide; or, if this could not be arranged, an effort should be made to have the matter submitted to the arbitration of a friendly power.

Having paid this tribute to appearances, the Secretary of Relations then proceeded to business. The boundary line was to follow the Rio Grande to a point two leagues north of El Paso, then to the source of the Gila River, down the Gila to the Colorado, and then to the Pacific to a point north of the village of San Diego. The boundaries were to be guaranteed by some strong and friendly power; the territory ceded was to be promptly organized into states or territories; the property held for religious purposes was to be protected; the validity of grants of land previously made by Mexican authorities was to be recognized; the United States government was to assume all claims of American citizens against Mexico, and was to agree never to annex any more Mexican territory; the American armies were to be withdrawn immediately upon the signing of the treaty; all captured artillery and munitions of war were to be restored, and the custom-houses were to be at once returned to the Mexican authorities.

These, with some other matters of less importance, constituted the general instructions. By separate documents the commissioners were instructed to endeavor to get the line of the Nueces, instead of the Rio Grande, and they were only to yield this point if the treaty could not otherwise be made; and they were not to accept less than thirty millions as compensation from the United States for the cessions of territory. Finally, by secret instructions (probably inspired by Thornton), they were empowered to receive payment in bonds of the English debt, of the latest issue, at a price not more than ten per cent over the average price on the London market during the previous six months.[1]

These instructions from Querétaro reached the city of Mexico on the first day of January, 1848, and on the next

[1] Roa Bárcena, 595. A summary of the points actually presented by the commissioners is annexed to a despatch from Doyle to Palmerston, Jan. 14, 1848, No. 10; *F. O. MSS.* The point last mentioned above was not presented.

day the first official conference was held, and the formalities were disposed of. On the following days the negotiators got fairly down to business. Trist explained that the line of the Rio Grande and the inclusion of San Diego in the cession of Upper California was a *sine quâ non;* but he made no difficulties as to the proposed clauses relative to the civil rights of the inhabitants of the ceded territories. He also said he would not pay Mexico more than fifteen million dollars, and waiving for the time being the final adjustment of these points, the Mexican commissioners prepared a draft treaty which they were willing to agree to.

In the meantime Anaya's term of office had come to an end. He had been elected to hold office only to the eighth of January, by which time it was expected that the new Congress would have assembled. No quorum of Congress, however, appeared then, or for many months afterward, and the presiding judge of the Supreme Court once more stepped into the Presidency. Peña's re-elevation to that dignity left open the office of Minister of Relations, and Luis de la Rosa was again appointed to that post; so that the administration was now composed of precisely the same persons as in the first part of November.

The temporary President and his Minister of Relations, to whom the essential points of boundary and compensation were referred, were not nearly so ready to yield to Trist's exigencies as the better-informed commissioners in the city of Mexico. On January 14 Rosa wrote that the government disapproved the boundary line as laid down by Trist, and he also again insisted that the sum to be paid by the United States should not fall below thirty millions. A week later, in reply to urgent letters from the commissioners, he again wrote, declining to give up San Diego or to surrender any portion of the states of Sonora or Chihuahua.

While Rosa was thus trying to get better terms—although he was in effect presented with an ultimatum to which he could only answer *yes* or *no*—the commissioners were becoming greatly alarmed lest their efforts should, after all, prove vain. They had tried from the very first

to get Scott to agree to an armistice pending negotiations; but Scott had had a lesson on the subject and refused. The fact was, however, that he was not strong enough for weeks after the occupation of the capital to undertake any forward movement, and he seems to have given the commissioners some rather vague assurances to the effect that he would not take any serious hostile steps while negotiations were pending. For these reasons the only detachments he sent out were to such relatively near-by towns as Toluca, Cuernavaca, and Pachuca, although his orders required him "to carry on further aggressive operations; to achieve new conquests; to disperse the remaining army of the enemy."[1] To the War Department he announced, however, the intention of occupying Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí as soon as he was sufficiently reinforced,[2] and he doubtless expressed the same purpose to others. By the middle of January the time for renewed aggressive operations seemed to have come.

"Marshall's division," the Mexican commissioners wrote, "arrived yesterday, and General Scott, as the English chargé d'affaires told us to-day, can no longer suspend the movements for military occupation of the country unless he has complete assurance that the treaty will be signed."[3]

Any general advance of the American troops they looked forward to with dismay, for they feared it would dissipate whatever sentiment there was in favor of peace; and their alarm was greatly increased by the news, which reached the city of Mexico on the seventeenth of January, that the state of San Luis Potosí had "pronounced" against the government at Querétaro. It was also reported that Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Zacatecas would join in the movement.

[1] Marcy to Scott, Oct. 6, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 138.

[2] Scott to Marcy, Nov. 27, 1847; *ibid.*, 140. For a general review of Scott's military movements during the period following the capture of Mexico reference may be made to his *Autobiography*, 552–584, and Scott's despatches of Dec. 15 and 17, 1847, and Jan. 6, 1848, in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1050, 1046, 1061.

[3] Couto and others to Ross, Jan. 23, 1848; Ros Bárcena, 602.

"As your Lordship may suppose," Doyle wrote, "this event has caused great consternation among the Peace party in this Country; for should this Revolution even partially prove successful, the hopes we have had of concluding a Peace, will, I fear, for the present be destroyed. The General Government has no money or means of resisting this movement, and other States may soon be tempted to follow the example given by San Luis, unless means are found to put it down at once. General Scott told me yesterday he was determined to March upon San Luis, and defend the General Government, but even this step might prove fatal to them, as their existence in the eyes of the nation would then be guaranteed by the Americans. . . . Every exertion is being made by the friends of the Government to encourage them to resist this attempt at Revolution, as well as to get the Peace signed without any further loss of time; for the Peace once signed, events might take a very different turn in this Country."[1]

However, the attempted revolution in San Luis failed for lack of support—the handful of government troops stationed there remaining loyal. So the anxious days passed by, but without any final decision from Querétaro as to the important matters of boundary and compensation. But while Peña and Rosa shivered on the brink, much time and labor had been devoted by the commissioners to the framing of the other articles of the treaty.

"It is hardly to be conceived," wrote Doyle, "what importance is attached in this country to words, and the Commissioners, as they said to me, are most anxious Mr. Trist should not alter their wording of the different Articles, as they were not afraid of their substance being ratified, but their wording might present great difficulties. They told me as a proof of this that the Congress refused to ratify the Treaty with France, because in mentioning the indemnity of 600,000 Dollars to be paid the word 'Pagar' was used instead of 'Entregar.'"[2]

Doyle, it seems, had constantly been consulted on the terms of the treaty, and was appealed to on both sides; but there was only one detail concerning which he showed much

[1] Doyle to Palmerston, Jan. 19, 1848, No. 12; *F. O. MSS.* See also Trist to Buchanan, Jan. 12, 1848; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 278.

[2] Doyle to Palmerston, Jan. 14, 1848, No. 10; *F. O. MSS.* *Pagar* = to pay. *Entregar* = to deliver. Trist's account of the method of drafting the treaty will be found in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 288.

interest, and that was the proposed right of transit over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Mackintosh, the British consul, had a concession at Tehuantepec which he considered extremely valuable. Trist talked it over with Mackintosh (who suggested selling his rights to the United States), but did not press the point with the commissioners, and nothing was said about it in the treaty as drafted.

Trist, however, could doubtless have got this or anything else he really wanted; for his position, whenever he chose to exert pressure, was one of extraordinary diplomatic strength. In the first place, the mere fact that he was acting in open defiance of orders was of great value, for he could always threaten to drop the negotiations in compliance with his instructions if the demands he made were not agreed to. Again, his distance from Washington was an advantage, as he could refuse to permit the delay of a reference for further instructions; and, indeed, it was apparent that if he had asked for instructions, the reply would have been only a reiterated order to return home. And finally the backing of Scott's small but highly efficient army, capable of rapidly overrunning nearly the whole of Mexico, gave weight to his words.

By the last week in January the discussions of the commissioners were concluded. Nothing remained to be said. The form of the treaty was settled, and all that was needed was to secure the approbation of the authorities at Querétaro.[1] Nearly two months had by this time elapsed since Trist had notified the Secretary of State that he would not obey the order for his recall; and it was evident that new and more imperative orders might come from Washington at any moment. Scott might be ordered to place him under arrest and send him out of the country; and if the treaty, over which so much time had been spent was to be signed at all, it must evidently be done at once. Trist therefore waited

[1] "The treaty agreed upon between myself and the Mexican plenipotentiaries will, according to every probability, be signed immediately upon the return of an express which has just been despatched to Querétaro."—(Trist to Buchanan, Jan. 25, 1848; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 280.)

hopefully, but undoubtedly with nervous anxiety, the courier's return from Querétaro.

The courier, however, bore disappointing news. Under date of January 26, Rosa wrote authorizing the commissioners to sign the treaty on condition that the boundary line was run so as to leave Lower California connected with Sonora by land; that no part of Sonora or Chihuahua should be included in the cession to the United States; that all hostilities should cease, and the invaders should withdraw from the capital immediately on the signature of the treaty; that all government revenues should at once be turned over to Mexico, and all military exactions should cease; and that the commissioners should manage to have advances made at once, on account of the payment to be made by the United States, so as to enable the government to sustain itself.

"The government," so Rosa informed the Mexican representatives, "will never agree to close the negotiations without having here, at Querétaro, under its control, the sum of 300 to 400,000 dollars and a positive assurance of receiving 200,000 dollars every month afterwards, for a period of three months. Without sums as large as these, to enable it to face the difficulties that will arise upon the signature of the treaty, the government is certain to be overturned within a few days. I think it unnecessary to say much to you on this subject. Not I alone, but many impartial men with whom we have discussed the matter, are certain that the government will inevitably succumb to anarchy unless it has at its command, when the treaty of peace is concluded, such adequate and assured resources as will enable it to maintain its authority."[1]

On the following day both Peña y Peña and Rosa wrote again, having evidently received later intelligence from the commissioners. The explanations received in regard to the boundary, they said, satisfied them that Sonora and Chihuahua were left intact; and as to the amount of compensation to be paid, they authorized the commissioners to settle that. But they still insisted on the necessity of obtaining immediate cash.

[1] Rosa to Commissioners, Jan. 26, 1848; extract in Rosa Bárcena, 604.

"I am now," said Ross, "drafting the full and final instructions which are to be sent you; but I find myself under the sad necessity of telling you that I shall never sign these instructions unless the government has first been assured of getting the funds referred to. . . . The government sorrowfully resigns itself to making peace in order to avoid greater evils; but these evils will not be avoided if the war of invasion is to be succeeded by civil war, and the present administration is left without means to repress sedition."[1]

Trist must have received from Thornton some advance intimation of this intransigeant attitude of the Mexican government, for at eleven o'clock at night on the twenty-eighth of January he called at the British legation and declared that he had decided to break off all negotiations and leave the country unless the treaty were signed at once. He told Doyle that he had urged in vain the danger of delay, and he declared that he would only wait "a reasonable time" for the arrival of another courier from Querétaro.

"He then said to me," Doyle reported, "he saw clearly they did not give sufficient credit to what he had so frequently urged, namely, the danger of delay, and he concluded by asking me if I would take upon myself to see the Commissioners, and convey the above Message to them, as he thought my doing so might be the means of inducing them to act at once, as they would place reliance on what I might say to them, respecting the very serious risk they were running."

Doyle saw the commissioners next morning (January 29), but was told they were still without authority from Querétaro to meet Trist's demands, and they begged for more time, "promising to write in such terms to their Government as would ensure a decided answer with the least possible delay." Trist, however, professed himself unwilling to wait. He went through all the forms of stern refusal and professed regret at the frustration of his hopes; but finally said he would send an official note to the commissioners breaking off negotiations, while at the same time Doyle might tell the commissioners confidentially that the note would be

[1] Same to same, Jan. 27, 1848; *ibid.*, 605.

withdrawn if they were ready to sign the treaty on the next Tuesday (the first of February).[1]

At the request of the Mexican commissioners Doyle helped matters on by writing a private note to Rosa, the Minister of Relations, to give him a statement of General Scott's intentions. In a recent conversation, said Doyle, Scott had explained the difficulties of his position—the orders he had received from Washington, the notorious fact of his being politically opposed to the administration, and the urgency of some of his officers for a forward movement. General Scott, according to Doyle, had added—

"that hitherto he had been able to delay sending troops into the interior of the Country, but as a fresh reinforcement had now arrived under General Marshall, he should be compelled to do so; unless, as he hinted to me, he might be able to come to another determination, from the fact of a Treaty of Peace having been signed.

"The General further added that much as he should regret being obliged to take such a step, yet his orders were most peremptory to March upon Querétaro, and not to allow the General Government an opportunity of establishing itself in any other point of the Republic. . . . I ought to add that General Scott has hitherto invariably expressed to me his determination to maintain the present Government of this Country against all Revolutionary Movements, and should he take the above step, it will only be in consequence of the strict orders he has already received from his Government."[2]

The same courier that bore Doyle's terrifying announcement of Scott's intention to march forthwith to Querétaro in order to disperse the provisional government, also bore an agitated letter from the commissioners. They had not been able, they said, to get Trist to agree to the evacuation

[1] Doyle to Palmerston, Feb. 1, 1848, No. 13; *F. O. MSS.*

[2] Doyle to Rosa, Jan. 29, 1848; copy enclosed with Doyle's No. 13; *ibid.* The War Department, however, had not given Scott orders to march on Querétaro or to break up the existing government. Marcy's latest instructions were very general. Scott was to occupy the country in order to collect taxes, and "deprive the enemy of the means of organizing further resistance"; but what parts should first be occupied was expressly left to Scott's judgment. —(Marcy to Scott, Dec. 14, 1847; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 148.) Whether Scott deliberately misstated the facts to Doyle, or whether Doyle misunderstood him, or whether Doyle deliberately misstated the facts to Rosa, it does not seem possible to determine.

of the capital, and the turning over of the public revenues immediately on the signature of the treaty; but the second article of the treaty, providing for a military convention in regard to the cessation of hostilities and the re-establishment of civil administration as soon as the circumstances of military occupation would permit, would, they thought, accomplish the same purpose. They believed that the treaty, while it bore the character of a national misfortune, had certainly nothing dishonorable in it. The government must now definitely decide, for the commissioners were of opinion that Trist could really wait no longer.

"We regret," they continued, "beyond anything the supreme government can imagine, that matters should have come to this point, and that Mr. Trist's exigencies, which he has never expressed with so much heat, should give rise to unfavorable impressions which we would wish to avoid—all the more because we are impressed by the gravity of this business and the difficulties the supreme government has had in giving us its definite orders. If we do not receive them by Tuesday, or if by some misfortune, which is to be apprehended, letters come from Washington, the negotiation will be broken off according to the statements of Mr. Trist and the English chargé d'affaires."[1]

The commissioners were also, it seems, of opinion that it would be unbecoming (*habian creido que no era decoroso*) to ask for pecuniary assistance before the signature of the treaty, but they had received proposals from bankers to make a loan of as much as three hundred thousand dollars.[2]

Under this pressure from the Mexican commissioners and the British chargé d'affaires, President Peña y Peña gave way. On the last day of January his Secretary of State instructed the commissioners that they might sign the treaty in the form agreed upon with Trist. To break off negotiations, he explained,

"would involve too seriously the existence of Mexico as a nation, and the government will never take upon itself the terrible responsibility

[1] Couto and others to Rosa, Jan. 29, 1848; extracts in Roa Bárcena, 602.
[2] *Ibid.*, 606.

of continuing the war in the condition of disorganisation in which many of the states find themselves—whether because they have been invaded, or because of the threats of revolution which have appeared in them. . . . These motives; the extreme scantiness of resources to which the government finds itself reduced; the probability that the United States may prove every day more exacting and more exaggerated in their demands; the duty of saving the nationality of Mexico at all costs; the consideration that the treaty, grievous as it is for the republic by reason of the fatal circumstances, does not contain a single condition dishonorable to Mexico; the duty imposed on the government to put an end to the calamities from which the country is suffering, and of checking the projects of annexation to Northern America, which are apparent even in the capital of the republic; these reasons, and many others which the government will in due season expound to the nation, compel His Excellency the provisional President to close the negotiations, by authorising you, as he does hereby authorise you, to sign the treaty with the least possible burdens upon the country, in view of the melancholy circumstances in which it is situated."[1]

The messenger who left Querétaro on the thirty-first of January bearing this final surrender of the provisional government rode fast; for the hundred and fifty miles to the capital were covered before the close of the next day, and the instructions were in the hands of the Mexican commissioners on the evening of the important Tuesday, the first of February. It may safely be assumed that the commissioners lost no time in notifying Trist of their readiness to sign.

For some reason it was determined that the treaty should not be formally executed in the capital. Doyle wrote to his government that this was the wish of the Mexican commissioners,[2] and the neighboring town of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the seat of the famous shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, whose miraculous image was venerated by all Mexicans, was selected as the most suitable place for the concluding ceremony which, it was hoped, would put an end to the war. The labor of completing and examining the five original copies of the treaty in English and Spanish doubtless absorbed the greater part of Wednesday, the second of Febru-

[1] *Ibid.*, 606.

[2] Doyle to Palmerston, Feb. 2, 1848, No. 14; *F. O. MSS.*

ary; but late on that afternoon everything was ready, so that at six o'clock the signatures were affixed, and the plenipotentiaries crossed the street from their place of meeting to the great church, to render thanks to the Almighty for the happy termination of their labors.

## CHAPTER L

### THE TREATY RATIFIED BY THE UNITED STATES

THE events of the first half of the month of September, 1847—the breaking off of negotiations for peace, the storming of Chapultepec, the capture of the city of Mexico, and the dispersal of Santa Anna's forces—had evidently marked the beginning of a new phase in the progress of the war; and it had also evidently become incumbent on the American administration to consider what policy should be adopted to meet the new conditions. Up to this time, the object to be attained was the destruction of the organized military forces of the adversary. That task might now be considered finished, for the scattered remnants of the Mexican armies could not be seriously regarded; and the question what was to be done next pressed for an answer.

The administration, as we have seen, had decided upon Trist's recall the moment they learned of his concessions to the Mexican commissioners at the September conferences; and on the day after the letter to that effect was despatched, the President sat down to draft the paragraphs of his annual message, in which he proposed to deal with the policy to be pursued in relation to the war. The main outlines of his recommendations were soon definitely fixed; and they were not varied in all the subsequent correction, revision, enlargement, and editing which the message received before publication. After meditating five days on the subject, the President was able to present his views to the cabinet for consideration, and with the remarkable lucidity which his diary frequently exhibits, he summarized them thus:

"I cannot undertake to state these views in detail. They were in substance that the war should be prosecuted with increased energy,

that I was opposed to withdrawing the army altogether, or retiring to a defensive line, but that I was in favour of holding all the ports, towns, Cities and Provinces which we had conquered, of pressing forward our Military operations, and of levying contributions upon the enemy for the support of our army. I was in favour, also, of establishing more stable Governments than those established over the Cities or Provinces which we have conquered, by the right of conquest. I was in favour, also, of avowing in my message to Congress in December next that the Provinces of New Mexico and the Californias should be retained by the U. S. as indemnity, & should never be restored to Mexico, and that in these Provinces permanent territorial Governments should be established. The Cabinet were unanimous in concurring with me in these views."[1]

To the detailed exposition of these recommendations, which were repeatedly discussed in cabinet meetings, the President made but one important addition—the result of a conversation with Buchanan. As finally agreed upon, the paragraphs in the annual message embodying Buchanan's suggestion, ran as follows:

"With a people distracted and divided by contending factions, and a government subject to constant changes, by successive revolutions, the continued successes of our arms may fail to secure a satisfactory peace. In such event, it may become proper for our commanding generals in the field to give encouragement and assurances of protection to the friends of peace in Mexico in the establishment and maintenance of a free republican government of their own choice, able and willing to conclude a peace which would be just to them, and secure us the indemnity we demand. . . .

"If, after affording this encouragement and protection . . . we shall ultimately fail, then we shall have exhausted all honorable means in pursuit of peace, and must continue to occupy her country with our troops, taking the full measure of indemnity into our own hands, and must enforce the terms which our honor demands."

Having thus, with the help of his cabinet, completed the draft of his annual message, the President read the paragraphs in which he discussed Mexican affairs to Senators Cass, Douglas, Dix, and Turney (of Tennessee); to Rhett, Stanton, Boyd, and McLane, of the House of Representa-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 189 (Oct. 12, 1847).

tives; and to Ritchie, the editor of the Washington *Union*. Such suggestions as they cared to make were carefully considered, and the much-edited message was duly sent in to Congress on Tuesday, the seventh of December, 1847.

The President's arguments in respect to the future operations of the army in Mexico were supplemented by a vigorous report from the Secretary of War, in which Marcy took up and discussed in detail the possible lines of military policy. The proposal that all the conquests made by American arms should be abandoned, and that the troops should be withdrawn from Mexican territory before any treaty of peace was concluded—a proposal which had already been seriously made by some well-intentioned people and which was shortly renewed in many petitions to Congress—he dismissed with contempt. It could indeed have resulted only in an indefinite prolongation of a state of quasi-war with Mexico.

Three modes of dealing with the existing situation seemed to Marcy to be possible:

> "*First*, to take and hold an indemnity line; to recede from all places and positions now occupied in advance of it, and cease from all aggressive operations beyond that line.
>
> "*Second*, to overrun the whole country, and hold all the principal places in it by permanent garrisons; and,
>
> "*Third*, to retain what we now possess, open the lines of communication into the interior, and extend our operations to other important places, as our means and the prospect of advantages shall indicate, keeping a disposable force always ready, within approachable limits, to annoy the enemy, to seize supplies, enforce contributions, and frustrate his efforts to collect means and assemble troops for the purpose of protracting the war."

Marcy considered that the first of these modes, "the line policy," was objectionable, as it would weaken the inducements of Mexico to conclude a speedy peace, while it would not result in any lessening of expense. The second mode suggested would require the services of not less than seventy thousand men and a correspondingly large expenditure of money. The third mode, which was really the second ap-

plied gradually and tentatively, was the one he recommended. He believed that in extending the area of occupation by American troops, those who held in their hands the decision of the question of peace would be made to feel the pressure of war. The substance of the wealthy and influential classes in Mexico had hardly been touched.

"As the Mexican army has long been to them the instrument of oppression, in the hands of their successive rulers, its destruction has not deeply enlisted their sympathies or alarmed their fears. Our army has afforded them better protection than their own; and thus, by our presence and our forbearance, they have, within certain limits, hitherto escaped exactions from either. But our successes have now opened the way to act upon and influence those who probably can, if they will, put an end to hostilities. By making them suffer the usual calamities of war, they must be made to desire peace."

This policy, if pursued, would require, as he estimated, an additional force of ten regular regiments to be enlisted for the war; and he urged that legislation authorizing such an increase of force be adopted without delay.[1]

The thirtieth Congress, which met for the first time on the first Monday of December, 1847, was nominally Democratic in the Senate by a good majority;[2] but this majority included such "insurgents" as Benton and Calhoun and Westcott of Florida, whose votes could never be relied on by the administration. The House of Representatives had a nominal Whig majority of six;[3] but that majority was even more uncertain than the Democratic majority of the Senate, for it included, besides six professed abolitionists, a large number of Southern Whigs who were always sure to vote with the Democrats on all questions in any way relating to slavery. But on questions of patronage, the Whigs stood together like a rock; and having elected a Whig speaker, a Whig clerk, and two Whig chaplains, the House of Representatives

[1] *Report of the Secretary of War;* Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 60–64.

[2] There were at first thirty-two Democrats and twenty-two Whigs, with two vacancies (Alabama and Texas); and these being filled early in the session by Democrats made the Senate stand thirty-four to twenty-two.

[3] One hundred and seventeen Whigs, one hundred and ten Democrats, and one "native American."

joined the Senate in the customary announcement to the President that they were ready for business.

Upon the expectant ears of Congress and the people of the United States, the President's words conveyed a message of disappointment. After the brilliant victories of the armies in Mexico and the taking of the capital, it was reasonably to be expected that some assured prospect of peace, if not the actual conclusion of a treaty, might be announced; but the President offered no hope of any end to the war. Instead, he announced that as Mexico had rejected the terms of peace which he had proposed—and which he now explained and justified—he had determined to recall the American commissioner and to notify the Mexican government that in the existing state of things, no further overtures of peace would be made; although at the same time he stated that he would be ready to receive and consider any proposals which might be made by Mexico, while warning them that their "obstinate perseverance" must influence the terms which it might be deemed proper to accept.

Evidently, there was no promise of peace here. Negotiations seemed to have been ended by the President's recall of the American commissioner, and there appeared to be no expectation of their being renewed by Mexico at any early day. Moreover the sibylline policy was to be adopted, and a refusal to accept the terms first offered was to be followed by raising the American demands. But these first demands included the whole of California and New Mexico, besides Texas to the Rio Grande. The President had expressly said that the only indemnity Mexico could furnish was by a cession of land; and, therefore, if the American demands were to be raised, the boundaries of the United States would be still further enlarged to the south. How far they would be enlarged would manifestly depend (if the President's views were to prevail) on Mexican obstinacy; and it was easy to argue that this obstinacy might be carried so far as to lead the President to be content with nothing less than the whole of Mexico. To Northern politicians, and to all opponents

of slavery expansion, such unlimited extension to the southward presented a truly terrifying perspective.

It is not surprising, therefore, that for nearly three months both houses should have engaged in a series of animated debates in which the whole conduct of the war, past and future, was the principal topic. The true purpose of most of the speakers was, no doubt, the hope of influencing in some measure the presidential election of 1848, and the pleasing task of preparing "ammunition" for that campaign was their almost avowed intention. But grave issues were in reality involved, although there was a certain impression of unreality about these debates, since they wandered off to many topics that had no relation to any action which Congress was then called upon to take, and dealt with all sorts of contingencies which might never arise, and which, in fact, never did arise.

In form, the debates in the House of Representatives up to the third of February, 1848, were upon a resolution to refer to the appropriate committees the various topics treated in the President's message; and in the unchartered liberty of the Committee of the Whole there was ample opportunity for both criticism and defence of the President and the Democratic party. So far as criticism turned on the future policy to be observed toward Mexico, it was necessarily vague and declamatory—for the President's policy had been declared by him to be dependent on what Mexico might do. But there was one real question which was pressing for decision but was not even yet apprehended in its full and sinister significance, namely, the exclusion of slavery from the territory to be acquired as the result of the war.

The Wilmot proviso debates were, therefore, renewed, for, although the very possibility of peace was still uncertain, the President had declared that the Californias and New Mexico would be retained by the United States in any event. Three courses were discussed, namely: To exclude slavery from the new territories altogether; to leave the question to the local territorial legislatures; to declare that Congress had no constitutional power to meddle with the question itself

and still less to delegate such a power to any territorial legislature which it might create. Such were the immensely important and far-reaching topics, which, in the coming decade, were to be more and more the subject of passionate differences.

In the Senate, the debates began with a resolution of Calhoun's, to the effect that the policy of conquering and holding all of Mexico should not be adopted. That policy, he declared, was the final and certain result of the course the administration had followed for the past two years. Cass pointed to the President's explicit declaration on that subject in his annual message:

"It has never been contemplated by me as an object of the war, to make a permanent conquest of the republic of Mexico, or to annihilate her separate existence as an independent nation. On the contrary, it has ever been my desire that she should maintain her nationality, and, under a good government adapted to her condition, be a free, independent and prosperous nation."

This was indeed the only policy which any responsible statesman could have possibly adopted; but Calhoun insisted that whatever the President's intentions might be, his actions would inevitably lead to annexing all Mexico. And so Calhoun set up his man of straw and triumphantly knocked him over in a speech which had been carefully prepared in the calm leisure of a South Carolina plantation. After listening politely, the Senate laid Calhoun's resolution on the table.[1]

Dickinson, of New York, brought forward a more practical subject of debate in resolutions which favored the acquisition of territory from Mexico, but upon condition that "all questions concerning the domestic policy therein" be left to the local legislatures.[2] Bagby, of Alabama, on the other hand, offered an opposing resolution to the effect that Congress had no power under the Constitution to exclude slavery from territory to be acquired.[3] But senators found a wider field

[1] *Congressional Globe*, XVII, 96–100. [2] *Ibid.*, 54.
[3] *Ibid.*, 241. This was, of course, the view afterward expressed by the majority of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case.

for discussion in the so-called Ten Regiment Bill, which for day after day and week after week afforded occasion for wearisome iteration of opinions as to the origin of the war, the acts of the administration, and the policy to be pursued in the future.

While Congress was thus debating the multitudinous questions which had already arisen out of the war and in anticipation the still more numerous and more serious questions which were likely to arise out of a treaty of peace, the administration was doing nothing to bring peace about. They were vainly waiting in the hope that Mexico might, of her own accord, and by some more or less established government, come forward with proposals on which a treaty could be based; but they took no steps to facilitate the making of such proposals, beyond instructing Scott to forward promptly to Washington any offers that might be made. Scott's days in command of the army were, however, by this time numbered.

About the middle of December, 1847, statements were published in the newspapers to the effect that Scott and Trist had at one time contemplated paying Santa Anna a bribe of a million dollars. The story referred, of course, to the unofficial negotiations at Puebla.[1] It was confirmed by a private letter from General Pillow to the President, as well as by the testimony of returned officers from the army, who gave the gossip of the camp; and the whole cabinet, with the President, "condemned the proceedings unqualifiedly," but determined to wait before taking any decisive step until further information could be obtained.

On the heels of this unpleasant story came a series of charges by Scott against Generals Worth and Pillow, and Colonel Duncan, the substance of which was that the latter two had written, or caused to be written, letters to the newspapers claiming undue credit for themselves and disparaging the commander-in-chief. As to Worth, the charges were based on a letter he had addressed to the Secretary of War and sent through General Scott, accusing the latter of op-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 251 (Dec. 18, 1847).

pressive and tyrannical treatment in regard to this same subject. All three officers had been put under arrest.

The President accurately summed up the affair thus:

"I deplore the unfortunate collisions which have arisen between the Gen'l officers in Mexico, as they must prove highly prejudicial to the public service. They have been produced, as I have every reason to believe, more by the vanity and tyrannical temper of Gen'l Scott, & his want of prudence and common sense, than from any other cause. . . . The whole difficulty has grown out of letters written from the army and published in the newspapers of the U. S., in which Gen'l S. is not made the exclusive hero of the War. Without expressing any opinion upon the merits or truth of these letters, there seems to have been no necessity to make so serious an affair of them as to break up the harmony and efficiency of the army while in the enemy's country. The whole matter is most unfortunate."[1]

The next day after recording these opinions in his diary, the President received a visit from two Democratic senators—Cass, of Michigan, and Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi—who brought a sensible letter from General Twiggs, in which the latter expressed the opinion that "if a commissioner with power to treat was now in Mexico a Treaty might be concluded."[2] This led to some talk about Scott; and both Senators expressed the opinion "in strong and decided terms" that Scott ought to be relieved from his command. As to making a treaty, Davis (who had been long enough in Mexico to learn something of its politics) gave the President excellent advice.

"Mr. Davis said," the President recorded, "that if commissioners should be appointed by Mexico to come to the U. S., the Government which appointed them would probably be overthrown before they could come here, execute their mission, and return, and that as likely as not they might be shot as traitors to their country when they did return; and that the only hope of peace was to have a person in Mexico authorised to avail himself of any favourable opportunity which might arise to make it and have it ratified at once."[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 266 (Dec. 30, 1847).

[2] Twiggs, must, of course, have written after hearing that Trist was recalled, and before his refusal to obey orders was announced.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, III, 270.

The President was not, however, quite ready yet to adopt this common-sense view, for he considered that the first thing to be accomplished was the suppression of Scott, who had by this time exhausted the patience of the entire cabinet. For two weeks they discussed the best mode of dealing with this thorny subject. It was unanimously agreed that Scott must go, but whether General Taylor or General William O. Butler should take over the command, involved a serious difference of opinion, the majority of the cabinet preferring Taylor. The President, however, decided in favor of Butler, who was then on the spot and next in rank to Scott. It was also agreed by the cabinet that Worth, Pillow, and Duncan ought to be released from arrest, and that instead of directing them to appear before a court-martial, all the charges, including those in reference to Scott's bribing Santa Anna, should be referred to a court of inquiry to sit in Mexico and to be composed of officers who had not been in Scott's army during the war and might therefore be considered impartial.[1]

News of the President's action reached Mexico just after the signature of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and was received by Scott with an indignation which he took no pains to disguise. He chose to consider himself as the sole person on trial, and in two letters, of the ninth and twenty-fourth of February,[2] he wrote in the most injurious language to the War Department, reviewing his services since the beginning of the war, recalling, as he said, "some of the

[1] The letters to Scott and the orders for the court of inquiry, dated Jan. 13 and 17, 1848, are printed in H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1040-1046. The court was composed of General Towson (paymaster-general), General Caleb Cushing (recently appointed from civil life), and Lieutenant-Colonel Belknap, of the fifth regular infantry. The court sat in the city of Mexico from March 16 to April 28, 1848, and in the United States, at New Orleans and Frederick, Maryland, at various dates up to July 1, 1848, examining the case against Pillow. It disapproved his conduct in some respects, but concluded that no further proceedings were called for by the interest of the public service. Scott declined to testify as a witness in regard to the negotiations with Santa Anna (apparently on the ground that the conduct of British agents was involved) and the court reported that it was without proof on that subject. See Quitman, II, 316-329; Hitchcock, 326. The other cases were dropped.

[2] H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1087, 1218.

neglects, disappointments, injuries, and rebukes" which had been inflicted upon him since he left Washington, and accusing the administration of systematic persecution. To this Marcy replied in a long review of the subject, which pretty effectually closed all discussion.[1]

It was while the cabinet discussions in regard to Scott's case were still going on that the first intimations were received of Trist's determination to disregard the orders to return home. The President naturally considered the information "most surprising."[2] He had been considering a project of giving General Butler full powers in Trist's place;[3] but this project was dropped the moment it appeared that Trist was continuing the negotiations. Ten days passed without any action by the President, until, on the fifteenth of January, Trist's long letter, in which he definitely announced his intentions, was received in Washington.[4]

"His despatch," Polk noted that same day, "is arrogant, impudent, and very insulting to his Government, and even personally offensive to the President. He admits he is acting without authority and in violation of the positive order recalling him. It is manifest to me that he has become the tool of Gen'l Scott and his menial instrument, and that the paper was written at Scott's instance and dictation. I have never in my life felt so indignant, and the whole Cabinet expressed themselves as I felt. I told Mr. Buchanan that the paper was so insulting and contemptably base that it required no lengthy answer, but that it did require a short, but stern and decided rebuke, and directed him to prepare such a reply. I directed the Secretary of War to write at once to Maj'r Gen'l Butler, directing him, if Mr. Trist was still with the Head Quarters of the army, to order him off, and to inform the authorities of Mexico that he had no authority to treat. If there was any legal provision for his punishment he ought to be severely handled. He has acted worse than any man in the public employ whom I have ever known. His despatch proves that he is destitute of honor or principle, and that he has proved himself to be a very base man."[5]

[1] Marcy to Scott, April 21, 1848; *ibid.*, 1227–1251.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, III, 283, 286 (Jan. 4 and 5, 1848).

[3] *Ibid.*, 274, 276, 280.

[4] See page 598, above.

[5] Polk's *Diary*, III, 300. When Trist's later despatches were received, the President thought worse of Trist than ever. He found these despatches "ar-

The proposed letter to be sent to General Butler proved, however, a difficult one to write, and it was only after ten days' consideration that a satisfactory form was agreed upon.[1]

The next news from Mexico as to a treaty of peace came in the shape of a private letter to Buchanan from the irrepressible Colonel Atocha, of whom the President now had a very poor opinion.

"Attocha," the President wrote, "is a great scoundrel, and his letter contained the infamous suggestion that he should be furnished with money to bribe the Mexican Congress to induce them to ratify a Treaty of peace, though he does not state whether a Treaty had been signed by Mr. Trist or not. He states that he had been informed that Mr. Trist had said that he had such a fund, and says he had not employed the proper person to use it. If Mr. Trist ever made such a statement, it was utterly false. He had no fund for any such purpose. No appropriation of the kind had been made, and no such idea ever entered my head. After Mr. Trist's late infamous conduct, I should, however, not be surprised to hear anything that is base of him. Attocha in his letter intimates that Gen'l Scott was in the scheme with Mr. Trist, and that he had been cheated by Santa Anna when he agreed to the armistice."[2]

But in spite of all this irritating news, nothing more was done toward replacing Trist, possibly because it was the President's secret hope that Trist might yet sign a treaty which could be accepted—a contingency which had been suggested and discussed with the cabinet on more than one occasion.[3]

At length, on Friday, the eighteenth of February, a confused telegram in cipher was received from Charleston, which was made out to mean that Trist had signed a treaty and was on his way with it to Washington.[4] Late on the next evening, Saturday, February 19, the treaty itself did arrive,

rogant, highly exceptionable, and even of an insulting character," and he wrote down the author as an "impudent and unqualified scoundrel." *Ibid.*, 357, 358.

[1] Marcy to Butler, Jan. 26, 1848; Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 146.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, III, 329. Atocha referred, of course, to the Puebla negotiations.

[3] *Ibid.*, 310, 313–317.

[4] *Ibid.*, 344.

brought not by Trist, but by a newspaper correspondent, Mr. James L. Freaner, of the New Orleans *Delta*, who had been employed by Trist as bearer of despatches; and Buchanan and the President anxiously and hastily read it over. A more careful examination next day by the President and the members of his cabinet showed that the treaty in its essential provisions—those of boundary and compensation to Mexico—followed the terms of the instructions given to Trist on April 15, 1847.[1]

The boundary was made to pursue the line of the Rio Grande from its mouth "to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico" as laid down on Disturnell's map, and was to run thence along the southern and western borders of New Mexico to the Gila River, then down the Gila to the Colorado, and then, from the confluence of the two rivers, straight across country to a point on the Pacific Ocean one league south of the port of San Diego. The compensation to be paid was fifteen million dollars—three millions immediately upon ratification by the Mexican republic, and the remaining twelve millions (with interest at six per cent) at subsequent dates. Trist had been authorized to go as high as twenty millions. In addition, the United States agreed to pay all of the unpaid claims against Mexico which had been decided under the conventions of April 11, 1839, and January 30, 1843, as well as all other claims of American citizens which might have arisen prior to February 2, 1848. The provisions as to claims followed closely Buchanan's *projet*.

The remaining provisions of the treaty did not, in general, seem objectionable. After declaring that—

"the boundary line established by this article shall be religiously respected by each of the two republics, and no change shall ever be made therein, except by the express and full consent of both nations, lawfully given by the General Government of each, in conformity with its own constitution,"

[1] As to these instructions, see p. 425, above. The provisions therein contained in relation to boundary were modified by later instructions, dated July 19, 1847.—(See Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81, 117.)

the treaty went on to provide for the free passage of the Gulf of California by vessels of both nations, the navigation of the Gila and the Rio Bravo, and other local matters, and for a "firm and universal peace." It was next agreed that immediately after the signature of the treaty a military convention should be entered into for a cessation of hostilities and the re-establishment of civil government in the places occupied by the American forces, "so far as this shall be permitted by the circumstances of military occupation." When the treaty was ratified by Mexico the blockade was to be raised, the withdrawal of the American forces was to be begun, and "castles, forts, territories, places and possessions" were to be restored, together with all the artillery and other public property remaining in them. Prisoners of war were to be returned as soon as practicable after the exchange of ratifications.

Articles VII and VIII provided for the treatment of Mexican citizens resident in the territory ceded to the United States and their rights of property. These citizens were to be "incorporated in the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the federal constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States"; all ecclesiastics and religious corporations were to enjoy "the most ample guarantees"; all buildings and property belonging to the Roman Catholic Church were to be protected; and Mexican residents in the ceded districts were to be allowed free communication with their ecclesiastical superiors, even though the latter might reside in Mexico.

Article X dealt with grants of land made under the sanction of Mexican authorities, especially in Texas—Mexico declaring that no grants had been made of land in Texas since March 2, 1836 (the date of the declaration of Texan independence), or elsewhere in the ceded territories since May 13, 1846 (the date of the American declaration of war).

By subsequent articles elaborate provision was made for control by the United States of marauding Indians; for a revival, during a period of eight years, of the Treaty of Com-

merce of 1831; for the collection of duties on merchandise imported prior to the complete evacuation of Mexico by the American forces; for arbitration in case of future differences; and for the rules to be observed in the event of any future war. The ratifications were to be exchanged within four months, but by an "additional and secret article," the time for the exchange of ratifications was fixed at eight months.[1]

On the day after the treaty was received in Washington, although it was a Sunday, a cabinet meeting was held at seven o'clock in the evening.

"The question to be decided," as the President noted, "was stated, viz., whether the Treaty should be rejected by me or sent to the Senate for ratification. A free discussion ensued. I took the advice of the Cabinet separately and individually. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker advised that I should reject it. Mr. Mason, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Clifford advised that I should accept it and send it for ratification to the Senate. All agreed if it was sent to the Senate it should be with a recommendation that the 10th article, which related to grants of land in Texas, and in the territories proposed to be ceded to the U. S., should be rejected. I reserved my opinion."[2]

Walker was probably actuated in his opposition to the treaty by his desire to secure more territory suited for slave labor. Buchanan's motives may have been more complicated. As in the case of Oregon, now that the treaty was actually made, he began to think that better terms might have been got and that it would be well to wait and try again before submitting the question to the Senate. A rather angry colloquy between Polk and Buchanan followed.

"I cannot help laboring under the conviction," the President wrote in his diary the next day, "that the true reason of Mr. Buchanan's present course is that he is now a candidate for the Presidency, and he does not wish to incur the displeasure of those who are in favour of the conquest of all Mexico. That he earnestly wishes me to send the Treaty to the Senate against his advice, I am fully convinced, not from anything he has said, but from circumstances & his general bearing, I do not doubt. . . . If it was received well by the country, being a

[1] The text of the treaty as signed, both in English and Spanish, will be found in Sen. Doc. 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 38–66.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, III, 347.

member of my administration, he would not be injured by it in his Presidential aspirations, for these govern all his opinions acts lately and; but if, on the other hand, it should not be received well, he could say 'I advised against it.'"[1]

On Monday, February 21, the day after the cabinet discussion, they met again, and the President stated that he had decided to submit the treaty to the Senate, with a recommendation to strike out the tenth article. His reasons were that the boundary proposed conformed to the instructions given to Trist in the previous April; that if it were *res nova* he would consider it desirable to demand more territory, but it was doubtful whether Mexico could be induced to consent to such sacrifices; that if the treaty were rejected by him, Congress might very likely refuse to grant men or money for continuing the war; and that in that event, if a Whig President were to be elected the following November, the country would, in all probability, lose the advantages secured by the war. He concluded by saying that if he were now to reject his own terms, as offered in April, he did not see how the administration could be sustained.[2] And later in the day he prepared a message to the Senate, aided by Mason, the Secretary of the Navy.

By a very remarkable coincidence John Quincy Adams, ex-President of the United States, whose later years had been so much engrossed with bitter opposition to the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico, was suddenly attacked in the House of Representatives by a paralytic stroke at the very time when the fate of the proposed Mexican treaty was being finally decided in the cabinet. For the next forty-eight hours he lay speechless and unconscious in the Speaker's room at the Capitol, and on Wednesday evening—after one brief moment of returning consciousness—he expired on the scene of his most recent and most memorable public labors. The consideration of the treaty involved the re-examination of many events in which Adams himself had been a leading actor, and of many topics in which he had

[1] *Ibid.*, 350. [2] *Ibid.*, III, 347.

displayed a passionate interest; and it is at least conceivable that had his life been prolonged for a few weeks the fate of the measure in the Senate might have been different.

The dramatic circumstances of Adams's fatal seizure naturally led to an adjournment of the Senate on both the Monday and the Tuesday, so that it was not until the morning of Wednesday, February 23 (while the ex-President still lingered), that the message transmitting the treaty could be delivered. The message was short. It explained how Trist, in spite of his having been recalled, as stated in the President's annual message, had remained in Mexico, and that "the plenipotentiaries of the Government of Mexico, with a knowledge of the fact," had concluded with him this treaty. The President had examined it "with a full sense of the extraneous circumstances attending its conclusion and signature," but as it conformed substantially to the instructions given in April, 1847, the President felt it his duty to submit it to the Senate for their consideration. He called attention to the tenth article relating to the public lands in Texas, and to the secret article extending the period for exchange of ratifications to eight months, and advised that these articles be rejected. As thus amended, the treaty, he said, would secure indemnity to the United States for the claims of injured American citizens, and a permanent establishment of the boundary of Texas; while "the magnanimous forbearance" exhibited toward Mexico would, it was hoped, insure a lasting peace. There was not a word of commendation of the treaty as a whole, and, as in the case of Oregon, the President left the entire responsibility to his constitutional advisers. He was, indeed, in a difficult position; for in his annual message he had declared that the obstinate prolongation of the war by Mexico called for a reconsideration of the terms of peace first offered, and he was now in effect urging the acceptance of those same terms which he had declared inadequate only three months before.

The terms of the treaty were not disclosed to the public for several days, but the fact that a treaty had been signed, and that the President had gone so far as to submit it to the

Senate for their advice and consent became known at once. There was a unanimous expression of satisfaction that peace was at hand, and a universal chorus of advice to the Senate from newspapers all over the country to take the treaty whatever it might be. Nor was it at all surprising that the public cared nothing about the details of the bargain. The President in his annual message had very clearly stated the main features which any treaty must contain if it were to meet with his approval. The United States was already in possession of the Californias and New Mexico and a great deal of Mexican territory besides. The President had declared that the Californias and New Mexico "never should be surrendered," and it was therefore safe to assume that the treaty which he had sent to the Senate accomplished that object at least. The rest was of less consequence. If the war, with its huge expense and incessant loss of life, was ended at last, if the annexation of Texas was recognized, and if Upper California and New Mexico were acquired, there was nothing left to fight for, and no reason why people in general should trouble themselves about details. The only persons likely to find fault were the more extreme opponents of slavery extension; and as they had all along been earnest advocates of peace, it was difficult for them to suggest any generally acceptable alternative if the treaty were to be rejected.

The great majority of the members of both houses of Congress seem to have been in favor of accepting any treaty which the administration might submit, no doubt for the same reasons that influenced other citizens of the United States. Benton, however, was able to discover other motives which he believed influenced the party leaders. The presidential aspirants, he believed, were not pleased at the great military reputations which were growing up; and he suspected that powerful influences were being brought to bear to put an end to a war "the very successes of which were becoming alarming to them."[1] Who these influential presidential aspirants were he did not reveal. Certainly

[1] *Thirty Years' View*, II, 710.

Taylor and Scott and Franklin Pierce and Buchanan and Webster and Benton himself, were not of the number.

The sentiments of the country must have become pretty generally understood to senators when they met again on Monday, the twenty-eighth of February, after their adjournment of several days consequent on the death and funeral ceremonies of Mr. Adams. But on that day, a few minutes before the hour for the meeting of the Senate, Sevier, of Arkansas, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, called at the White House bringing the disconcerting intelligence that the committee had decided to report the treaty adversely, with a recommendation that "an imposing commission" of three or five persons be sent to Mexico to negotiate a new treaty. The President understood him to say that the other four members of the committee—Webster, Benton, Mangum, of North Carolina, and Hannegan, of Indiana—had not objected to the treaty itself, but to its having been negotiated by Trist after being recalled as commissioner.[1] The President told Sevier that the course proposed was extraordinary and such as could not be approved.

"I told him I condemned the insubordinate & insolent conduct of Mr. Trist, but that the Treaty itself was the subject for consideration and not his conduct, and that if the provisions of the Treaty were such as could be accepted, it would be worse than an idle ceremony to send out a grand commission to re-negotiate the same Treaty. I told him, also, that if the Senate advised me to send out a ch a commission, I hoped they would advise me also what terms they ould accept. I consider the course of the committee of the Senate weak, if not factious, and cannot doubt that the object of Mr. Webster is to defeat any Treaty, clamorous as the Whig party profess to be for peace, until after the next Presidential election. . . . I do not wonder at his course, but I am surprised at that of Mr. Hannegan and Mr. Benton. Extremes sometimes meet and act effectively for negative purposes, but never for affirmative purposes. They have done so in this instance. Mr. Webster is for *no* territory and Mr. Hannegan is for *all* Mexico, and for opposite reasons both will oppose the Treaty.

[1] More probably the committee objected because Trist had not been duly nominated and confirmed by the Senate—thus wounding the susceptibilities of that invariably jealous body.

It is difficult, upon any rational principle, to assign a satisfactory reason for anything Col. Benton may do."[1]

The committee, after hearing from the President, did not persevere in their purpose to make an adverse report, and when the Senate went into executive session that afternoon the treaty was reported without recommendation.

The presentation of the committee's report was at once followed by Webster's moving that further consideration of the President's message of February 22, 1848, be postponed, and that it be recommended to the President to nominate three or more "commissioners plenipotentiary" to negotiate with Mexico a "treaty of peace, boundaries, and indemnities due to American citizens." Houston followed with preambles and a resolution which recited at great length that Trist was without authority; that the instrument submitted to the Senate was, therefore, "utterly void and ineffectual"; that there was ground for suspecting interference by British agents; that the ceded territory was probably covered by fraudulent grants; that the United States ought to acquire territory as far south as Tampico and retain the castle of San Juan de Ulúa for military reasons; and that the executive had power to send properly authorized agents of "intelligence and integrity" to Mexico. The paper concluded by a proposal that "the before described agreement be rejected by the Senate." Thus did Massachusetts and Texas meet.

All through the executive sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday of that week, a debate continued on Webster's dilatory motion. Houston wished the discussions reported, but his motion to that effect was voted down, and no record remains of the course of the debates; but it may safely be inferred that the views of senators as to the merits of the treaty, or rather as to the prudent course for the Senate to

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 365. The President, as we shall see, was quite right in his guess as to Webster's motives and the course of two out of the three senators; for Webster and Benton both voted against ratification. Hannegan, a Democrat, and Mangum, a Southern Whig, finally voted for it, as, of course, did Sevier.

pursue, were pretty fully stated. By Thursday, the second of March, the subject was fairly exhausted, and, on motion of Mangum, of North Carolina, Webster's motion was laid on the table without a division. Houston's motion for rejection was not considered, and a detailed discussion of the treaty was begun.

The Senate struck out, as the President had advised, the tenth article as to grants of land and the secret article extending the time for exchanging ratifications. It also struck out the ninth article, dealing with the property rights of Mexican citizens in the ceded territories and the protection of ecclesiastical rights and privileges, and substituted the language of the much shorter third article of the Louisiana Treaty.[1] The mode of paying the twelve million dollars was also modified, and with some other minor modifications the treaty was approved.

There were, however, some extremely important and significant but unsuccessful attempts to introduce radical changes. The first of these was a proposal by Jefferson Davis to amend the definition of the boundary, so as to include in the cession to the United States the greater part of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, the whole of Coahuila and a large part of Chihuahua. This was decisively beaten by a vote of 44 to 11, most of the leaders of the Democratic party, Benton, Calhoun, Herschel V. Johnson, Cass, Mason of Virginia, and Sevier, voting with the majority. In the minority were both of the senators from Texas, Dickinson, of New York, Douglas, of Illinois, Hannegan, of Indiana, one each from Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi, and one each from Ohio, Missouri, and Tennessee.

Crittenden, of Kentucky, then offered a resolution to recommit the treaty, with instructions to the committee to modify it so as to provide "a satisfactory establishment of the boundary of Texas and the acquisition of the bay and harbor of San Francisco." This was lost by a strict party vote of 18 Whigs against 30 Democrats.

[1] The insertion of this article had been suggested by Buchanan in his original instructions to Trist in April, 1847.

Badger, of North Carolina, another Whig, moved to strike out from the description of the boundary all relating to the line west of El Paso, his purpose being to follow this up by a new description which should exclude, from the territory to be ceded, the whole of New Mexico and California. This motion was also lost by a vote of 35 to 15, three Southern Whigs—Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, Bell, of Tennessee, and Johnson, of Louisiana—voting with the Democrats. The motive of the resolution was, of course, the same as that of Berrien's motion in the previous session of Congress—to prevent a discussion of the question of the extension of slavery to the newly acquired territory by providing that no new territory should be acquired.

"I was of the opinion," Webster explained six months later, "that the true and safe policy was, to shut out the whole question by getting no territory, and thereby keep off all controversy."

If one-third of the Senate had stood firm with Webster, the treaty would have been defeated—a result which would, at that time, have gratified him. He was therefore bitter against his New England colleagues who did not support him.

"Why," he asked, "were there not one third? Just because there were four New England Senators voting for these new territories. That is the reason. . . . I would have risked anything, rather than have been a participator in any measure which should have a tendency to annex Southern territory to the States of the Union. I hope it will be remembered, in all future time, that on this question of the accession of these new territories of almost boundless extent, I voted against them, and against the treaty which contained them."[1]

[1] Speech at Marshfield, Sept. 1, 1848. Webster's *Works*, II, 444. The four New England votes cast against Badger's motion were cast by the four Democrats from New England—two from Maine, one from New Hampshire, and one from Connecticut. Von Holst, who is not to be suspected of a bias toward Polk's administration, says: "Those who turned the scale in favor of a termination of the war on the terms offered, were more far-seeing, or were guided by a truer instinct. The statesman has to deal, not with what is desirable, but with hard stubborn facts. Webster's policy would have led, not to peace without territorial acquisitions, but to a prolongation of the war, and thus to incomparably greater annexations of which the fatal results could not be foretold."—(*Constitutional History*, 1846–1850, 345.)

The vote on Badger's motion was immediately followed by a motion by Senator Baldwin, of Connecticut, who proposed to insert at the end of the descriptions of the boundary the Wilmot proviso in the following form: "Provided there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the territories hereby ceded, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." This was lost by a vote of 15 to 38, the minority being composed of twelve Northern Whigs and three Northern Democrats—Atherton, of New Hampshire, Niles, of Connecticut, and Dix, of New York. All the votes from the South and West (except one Whig vote from Ohio), both votes from Maine and both from Pennsylvania, were included in the majority, which was made up of 29 Democrats and 9 Whigs. The result was, on the whole, on sectional rather than on party lines—the South and West being opposed to the northeastern states.[1]

The final vote on ratification of the treaty was taken on Friday, the tenth of March. There were 38 votes in its favor and 14 against—much more than the necessary two-thirds. An analysis of this final vote shows that it was neither partisan nor sectional. The minority was made up of seven Whigs and seven Democrats. Four senators, who were probably not pleased with the treaty, refrained from voting, namely: one Democrat—Houston, of Texas—and three Whigs—Phelps, of Vermont, Clayton, of Delaware, and Pearce, of Maryland. If all four had voted against the treaty it would still have been ratified by 38 to 18. Of the fourteen votes against the treaty, four came from the New England and Middle states and fourteen from the the South and West. Some of the Southern and all the Eastern votes—as, for example, those of Webster, Berrien, and Badger—were cast against the treaty because the United States acquired too much new territory. On the other hand, presumably all of the Western and some of the Southern votes cast against the treaty—as those of Benton

[1] Webster did not vote on this motion; nor did Houston, of Texas, or Westcott, of Florida. This was probably a "pair." Otherwise, every senator voted.

and Douglas—were so cast because the United States got too little.

The majority for ratification of the treaty comprised twenty-six Democrats and twelve Whigs. Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in the North; Virginia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky in the South; and Indiana and Michigan in the West, were united in its favor. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Texas each gave the treaty a single vote.[1]

It is reasonably certain that this vote fairly represented the sober opinion of the people throughout the Union.

[1] The injunction of secrecy was removed from the proceedings of the Senate on this treaty and the documents accompanying it on May 31, 1848, and they were all printed as Senate Executive Document 52, 30 Cong., 1 sess.

## CHAPTER LI

### THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE

PRESIDENT POLK was kept pretty accurately informed of the progress of the treaty through the Senate, and some days before the final vote he learned that it would probably be ratified with amendments. But what view the Mexican Congress might take of the amendments thus grafted upon the treaty was a matter upon which the American administration had no means of information, and which gave much concern to the President and still more to his Secretary of State. Buchanan, who a few days before had been contending that the treaty was not sufficiently favorable to the United States, now became alarmed lest it might be lost; and it is evident that there was reasonable ground for anxiety upon this head. Nobody in Washington could feel sure that the changes in the phraseology of the articles of the treaty which related to such matters, for example, as the free exercise of religion or the protection of the property of religious corporations, might not prove sufficient to turn the majority of the Mexican Congress against ratification, and a failure of the treaty would have been deeply mortifying to the American administration. Probably most people would not have stopped to apportion the blame, or to reflect that all changes in phraseology were the work of the Senate and not of the President and his advisers; but they would unquestionably have looked with impatience and indignation at the prolongation of a war of which every one was tired.

The President therefore thought it important to send the treaty to Mexico by the hands of an American commissioner, who could explain the situation clearly and persuade the

Mexicans to accept the modifications made by the Senate. After consulting the cabinet at its regular meeting on Tuesday, the seventh of March, he decided to intrust the commission to Louis McLane, of Baltimore, who had retired not quite two years before from the position of minister to England. McLane's long diplomatic experience and other commendable qualities seemed to make him eminently qualified for the duty; but he was no longer young and he evidently feared the fatigues of the journey. The ill-health of his wife was made an excuse for declining the appointment.

After much perplexity the President on Saturday, the eleventh of March—the day after the Senate had advised ratification—again discussed the subject with his cabinet, and reached the decision to invite Senator Sevier, of Arkansas, to undertake the mission. Sevier was chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and at first refused, on several obvious grounds; but the President insisted, and after a day's reflection Sevier consented to go. His nomination was sent in to the Senate on the following Tuesday, with that of Robert M. Walsh, of Pennsylvania—a gentleman who had served as secretary of the legation in Brazil and was understood to read and write both French and Spanish—as secretary of the commission. Both were confirmed on the same day; and in the meantime a copy of the treaty as amended by the Senate was sent to General Butler in Mexico, with a statement that the letter would be followed by "a commissioner invested with Plenipotentiary Powers" in the course of a few days.[1]

The instructions to Sevier were dated just a week after the President had invited him to go to Mexico. They began by explaining that his whole duty would consist "in using every honorable effort to obtain from the Mexican government a ratification of the treaty in the form in which it has been ratified by the Senate; and this with the least practicable delay." He was advised to perform this duty as much as possible by personal conferences, and to avoid diplomatic notes which might lead to endless discussions and indefinite

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 368–382.

delay; and he was furnished with an outline of the arguments which might safely be employed to prove the advantages to Mexico of a prompt ending of the war. Buchanan again reverted to the idea of "taking the full measure of indemnity into our own hands," which he had induced the President to embody in his annual message, and which had been the subject of much adverse comment in Congress.

"Should the war be renewed," Buchanan wrote in the instructions to Sevier, "instead of purchasing at a fair price a portion of the territories which we have been obliged to conquer and which are now in our undisturbed possession, and restoring the remainder to Mexico, we shall be compelled to appropriate, without pecuniary compensation, a just and ample indemnity in Mexican territory for all the expenses of the war." [1]

At the same time a note was addressed to the Minister of Foreign Relations of the Mexican republic, in which the action of the Senate was explained and each of the seven amendments made by it was taken up in turn and discussed. The view was expressed that none of the amendments was of such a character that the Mexican government should have any difficulty in agreeing to them. The tone of the note was extremely conciliatory.

"It affords me," said Buchanan, "sincere satisfaction to observe that none of the leading features of the treaty have been changed. Neither the delineation of the boundaries between the two republics, nor the consideration to be paid to Mexico for the extension of the boundaries of the United States, nor the obligation of the latter to restrain the Indians within their limits from committing hostilities on the territories of Mexico, nor, indeed, any other stipulation of national importance to either of the parties has been stricken from the treaty by the Senate. In all these important features it remains substantially as it was when it came from the hands of the negotiators." [2]

[1] Buchanan to Sevier, March 18, 1848; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 47–52.

[2] Buchanan to Minister of Foreign Relations, March 18, 1848; *ibid.*, 42. The draft of this despatch was read at a cabinet meeting held on Tuesday, March 14, and for the next two days there was constant discussion among the members of the administration as to the form of the document and the instructions to be given to Sevier. See Polk's *Diary*, III, 383–388.

These papers had been drafted and every precaution seemed to have been taken to propitiate or persuade the Mexican Congress, when the President learned on the Friday afternoon that Sevier was seriously ill, so much so that his physician had refused to permit any one to visit him. His immediate departure was obviously out of the question. After consulting Buchanan it was agreed that, in view of the danger that the Mexican government might refuse to accept the Senate's amendments, another appointment must be made at once. "It was a case of emergency, and no time was to be lost," was the President's conclusion; and he and Buchanan concurred in thinking that Nathan Clifford, the Attorney-General, was the fittest person for the post. Clifford agreed to go if the President thought it necessary for the public service, and Sevier, whose condition was improved the next morning, and who was consulted by Buchanan, likewise approved. Accordingly the President on Saturday, the eighteenth of March, nominated Clifford as associate commissioner, to act separately, or jointly with Sevier, in case the latter should so far recover as to be able to follow and join him in Mexico. The nomination was confirmed at once, and that same night Clifford and Walsh set off for Mexico.[1] Clifford was handed the instructions which had been prepared for Sevier, and was directed to act in all particulars as if these instructions had been formally addressed to Sevier and himself jointly.[2] He reached the city of Mexico on the eleventh of April.

Three days after Clifford left Washington the New York *Herald*, by one of those pieces of "enterprise" which have done so much to discredit American journalism, published the text of the treaty, together with a part of the confidential correspondence sent by the President to the Senate. The President, who had what R. L. Stevenson pleasantly describes as the Scottish trait of valuing a secret for itself and for the congenial exercise of keeping it, was extremely indignant; but there was really good reason to fear lest this

[1] *Ibid.*, III, 389–392.
[2] Buchanan to Clifford, March 18, 1848; H. R. Doc. 50, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 52.

publication, if reprinted in Mexico, might prejudice the chances of ratification. The Senate also professed indignation and instituted an inquiry by a committee as to the source whence the *Herald* obtained its information. Nugent, the newspaper correspondent, being brought before the committee, completely exonerated the State Department, but refused further information. He was arrested and committed to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and there, as usual in such cases, the matter ended.[1]

Two days after the publication in the New York *Herald* Senator Sevier had so far recovered from his illness that he was able to start for Mexico, and, travelling rapidly, he arrived at the capital on the fifteenth of April, only four days after Clifford.

During the period of a little more than two months which had then elapsed since the signature of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, political conditions in Mexico had remained practically unchanged. The command of the American army had been turned over by Scott to Butler; Santa Anna had finally determined to cease from troubling, and had applied to the government for a passport to enable him to leave the country; a formal armistice had been adopted and signed; and the Mexican Congress was still without a quorum. These were facts easily learned by the commissioners; but what the temper of the Mexican Congress might prove to be when it did meet was a matter about which it was difficult for them to gain any satisfactory assurances.

Opinion in Mexico was evidently much divided upon the subject of peace with the United States; but people in general had very little knowledge as to what the terms agreed upon actually were. The negotiations had been conducted with the greatest possible secrecy, so that it was not until two or three days after they were concluded that the Mexican newspapers began to announce that a treaty of some sort had been signed, although they were quite unable to state its terms. But on the sixth of February the government had thought it wise to make an official statement. On that

[1] Polk's *Diary*, III, 398–414, *passim*.

day the Minister of Relations sent a circular to the governors of the several states informing them of the bare fact of the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and stating that he would give them complete information as soon as the treaty should have received the sanction of Congress. For the most part the replies of the governors were simple acknowledgments of receipt, although some expressed their regret that any treaty with the United States should have been made, and that its text should not have been made known.[1]

Why the government persisted in a policy of secrecy is hard to see, but they probably believed that so long as discussion was confined to the broad general question of peace, on the one hand, or a continued state of war, on the other, the result was more likely to be favorable than if the details of the adjustment were to become the subject of newspaper debate.

The well-informed British legation was unable to form any opinion as to the probable action of Congress, though the British diplomatic and consular representatives in Mexico were eager to see the negotiation in which they had been so deeply concerned carried to a successful conclusion. Writing in the middle of February, the British chargé d'affaires said that the signature of the treaty had created a very great sensation throughout Mexico.

"The Puro or Radical party," he continued, "who have been intriguing underhand a good deal with the American Authorities, were taken very much by surprize and have been thrown into dismay and are trying and will continue to try to the utmost in their power to prevent ratification. One of the doctrines they have been preaching has been the annexation of this country to the United States, as the only means to prevent its falling into a complete state of anarchy, and they were the real authors of the late attempt at San Luis Potosí to get up a Revolution against the General Government, but which has fortunately entirely failed. I am in great hopes that the Government will be able to carry through the Ratification of the Treaty, unless indeed they mismanage the matter very much."[2]

[1] Roa Bárcena, *Invasion Norte-Americana*, 619.
[2] Doyle to Palmerston, Feb. 13, 1848, No. 18; *F. O. MSS.*

The extraordinary notion of attempting to prevent anarchy by encouraging mutiny could hardly have occurred to any one outside of Mexico; but a still more remarkable state of feeling was revealed by the opposition of well-to-do Mexicans to the evacuation of their country by the invaders. Doyle in the despatch just quoted refers as follows to this attitude:

"The moment is looked forward to with dismay when the American Forces shall leave this Country, by such as have property to lose. They all fear when that moment arrives, Revolution upon Revolution will be attempted, especially as each military leader will now endeavour to get hold of as much of the money as he can, which is to be paid as indemnity for the territory ceded to the United States. . . . During the late negotiations, on several occasions, the Mexican Commissioners have spoken to me in this sense, and I am certain this feeling on their part retarded much the conclusion of the Treaty."

So strong indeed was the desire to have Mexico remain under American rule that proposals were actually made to Scott to have him issue a pronunciamiento and declare himself dictator after the ratification of the treaty of peace. This amazing plan contemplated the organization of an army of Americans, to be recruited from the men discharged at the close of the war, which Scott thought "would suffice to hold the republic in tranquillity and prosperity. . . . Being already in possession of the principal forts, arsenals, foundrys, mines, ports of entry and cities, with nearly all the arms of the country, it was not doubted that a very general acquiescence would soon have followed." Scott states that he "ultimately" declined the overtures made to him, although "highly seductive both as to power and fortune."[1] The same feeling of dismay at the prospect of a renewal of the troubles of the past thirty years of native Mexican rule, served also to strengthen the small Royalist party throughout the country; and if a more capable man than Paredes had been at the head of that movement it might have succeeded—unless indeed the government of the United States had interposed its veto.

[1] Scott's *Autobiography*, 581–582.

But as Congress could not yet be brought together, the first duty of the government after signing the treaty of peace was to conclude a formal armistice with the American commander. The treaty had provided in its second article that a convention should be entered into forthwith for "a provisional suspension of hostilities," in order that, in the places occupied by the American forces, "constitutional order may be re-established, as regards the political, administrative, and judicial branches, so far as these shall be permitted by the circumstances of military occupation"; but for several days the Mexican President delayed the appointment of commissioners to settle the terms of the armistice, and it was not until the seventeenth of February that Generals Mora and Quijano arrived at the city of Mexico and called upon Scott.

Scott being fully aware of Trist's disobedience of orders and lack of power to conclude any treaty, and being therefore doubtful of the attitude of the administration toward it, and having also received intimations of his own recall, felt some embarrassment. If he was to be superseded he wished his successor to take the responsibility of so far recognizing the treaty as to agree to an armistice.[1] But this embarrassment was short-lived, for on the next day after Mora and Quijano had called on him Scott received orders relieving him from the command of the army, so that the duty of dealing with the question of an armistice necessarily devolved on General Butler. Butler, who felt sure of President Polk's support, did not hesitate to act, and appointed Generals Worth and Smith as the American representatives; but although the negotiation should have been a simple matter, and was evidently of the greatest importance to the Mexican government, the business dragged along until the twenty-ninth of the month.

It was difficult for American and English observers to understand why so much time should be consumed.

"This extraordinary apathy in the present critical situation of this country," wrote the British chargé d'affaires, "seems unaccountable

[1] Hitchcock, 319.

to the Americans, who are precisely the contrary of the Mexicans, and General Butler, from not knowing their character, cannot, I perceive, entirely divest himself of the idea of there being some want of good faith in such conduct. I am not of that opinion, as I know how really anxious they are for the conclusion of the peace, but, I am sorry to say, I perceive that severe as the lesson has been which the Mexicans have received, they do not appear to have much profited by it. The same system of putting off every thing is continued. Every body complains of the Government, and nobody comes forward to assist in its difficulties. Every body is alarmed for fear of compromising themselves,—(that one word 'compromiso,' which is always in the mouth of a Mexican, has been the source of the greater part of the evils of this country); and as yet every thing tends to shew that unless some entirely unforeseen event should take place, this country will fall into a complete state of anarchy whenever the Americans leave it."[1]

After the agreement was signed another eight days elapsed before the ratification was returned from Querétaro, but finally the armistice went into effect, five weeks after the signature of the treaty. It provided for a general suspension of hostilities throughout the whole of the republic—the troops on each side to remain in the position which they then occupied. With a view to re-establishing constitutional order it was agreed that in all places occupied by the American forces Mexican citizens should be free to exercise their political rights and to elect officials and representatives as provided by existing law. At the time of an election in any city or place occupied by American troops, the military commander was to withdraw the whole of his forces from such city during the hours fixed for the election, leaving only sufficient guards for the quarters, magazines, hospitals, and lodgings of the troops; and no person belonging to the American army was to interrupt or intervene in any manner in such elections. With certain specified exceptions (particularly duties on imports) the Mexican authorities were to collect taxes; public offices were to be turned over to the local authorities; the civil courts were to be freely opened; the military or civil tribunals established in Mexico by American

[1] Doyle to Palmerston, March 14, 1848, No. 29; *F. O. MSS.*

authority were only to take jurisdiction in cases where some person connected with the American army was concerned; and in the city of Mexico and elsewhere a Mexican police force was to be organized.

Most important of all for the Mexican government was the sixteenth clause of the agreement, which provided that either or both of the contracting parties should be bound to disperse any reunion of armed men who might collect in any place within the republic of Mexico with the view to committing unauthorized hostilities, and that the carrying out of this obligation should not be considered as a breach of the armistice.[1] These provisions virtually conferred upon General Butler the power to put down all attempts at revolution in any part of Mexico, and must have proved of immense potential value in strengthening the position of the Querétaro government. Two small attempts at San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas were put down without American assistance, and other threatened risings at Oaxaca and Guadalajara were likewise suppressed without the least difficulty.

Meanwhile constant discussion as to the policy of making peace went on in the public press, but the opposition to ratifying the treaty found little support. Men like Rejón contended that Trist had no authority to represent the United States; that the treaty would merely postpone further losses of territory; that neither the executive nor legislative branch of the government had any power to alienate territory; and that the government, even if it had such power, should have ceded the territory to European powers.[2] The absurdity of the last suggestion needed no refutation, but as to the question of the powers and duties of the government the Mexican commissioners who negotiated the treaty made a spirited reply. The treaty, they said, represented, no doubt, a great misfortune, but none of its stipulations involved dishonor or disgrace, and none imposed a perpetual burden upon the country. Within the territory

[1] The full Spanish text of the agreement is in Dublan y Lozano, V, 345–348.
[2] Roa Bárcena, 615.

that remained to Mexico the independence of the nation continued to be absolute and complete, and it would be just as well able to adopt a purely Mexican policy as it had been at the time of acquiring its independence.

"The loss of territory to which we have agreed, was compulsory and inevitable when it came to adjusting the terms of peace. Agreements of this nature are really formed in the course of a campaign, as battles are won or lost: and the negotiators do no more than to reduce to written forms the final results of a war. It was in the war, and not in the treaty, that the territory which now remains in the possession of the enemy was lost. The present treaty does not merely prevent an increase of our losses by a continuance of the war; but it serves to recover the better part of that which was already under the control of the conquering arms of the United States: it is more exactly an agreement of recovery than an agreement of cession."

As to the power of the authorities of the nation to cede its territory, the commissioners contended that no express authority in the Constitution was necessary to the validity of such a treaty, and that a national sacrifice of that kind might well become essential to save the very life of the nation, just as the amputation of a limb might be essential to save the life of a man.

"These," they said, "are the conclusions of enlightened reason; they are inspired by common sense; and they have been adopted by all nations on similar occasions, whatever may have been their political organization or their constitutional laws."[1]

In addition to arguments of this nature the stern pressure of facts was constantly operating to strengthen the position of the government and to encourage approval of the treaty. The financial condition of the government, so long as the custom-houses remained in the possession of the Americans, was bound to continue almost desperate; while the assurance of receiving three million dollars the moment the treaty was ratified, was an enormously strong argument with the party actually in power and with all who preferred

[1] *Ibid.*, 615-617. This "Exposición" was the work of D. Bernardo Couto, one of the commissioners.

a settled government to a condition of anarchy. And finally the news which arrived from time to time of the unsuccessful efforts to drive out American garrisons from the ports on both sides of the Gulf of California, as well as the reports of Sterling Price's advance through the state of Chihuahua and his defeat of General Trias, were reminders of what would inevitably happen upon a larger scale if the treaty were *not* ratified.

A matter which was considered extremely important was the action of the people of New Mexico. In the autumn of 1847 Sterling Price, as military governor of the territory, summoned a legislative assembly, which was thereupon elected, and convened at Santa Fe on December 6, 1847. This assembly passed, among others, an act calling for a convention of delegates to organize a territorial government, which was approved and published by General Price on February 5, 1848, and was based, of course, upon the assumption that New Mexico was to become and remain a part of the United States. The news reached the city of Mexico early in March, evidently in a confused form.

"The State of New Mexico," wrote Doyle, the British chargé d'affaires, "which was by the Treaty to have become United States property, has annexed itself by a Majority of ten votes out of thirteen to that Country. This is a most fortunate circumstance for this Government, as the opposition were determined to raise a cry that what is here called the 'Preciosa Sangre Mejicana' had been sold to the enemies; but the New Mexicans have saved them that trouble by annexing themselves of their own accord. The Mexican commissioners who Negotiated the Treaty of Peace, congratulate themselves on not having to defend that part of their Treaty and they now express themselves with great confidence as to its ratification."[1]

One fact, however, of the greatest importance in any consideration of the treaty, was as yet unknown. About a week before the treaty was signed, gold in paying quantities had been discovered on the south fork of the American River, some forty miles from Sutter's Fort. On account of the distance, the wretched means of communication, and

[1] Doyle to Palmerston, March 14, 1848, No. 29; *F. O. MSS.*

Sutter's efforts to keep the discovery a secret, the fact was unknown in Mexico until certainly the latter part of August, 1848. In that month Lieutenant Beale, a young officer of the United States' navy, who had gone out with Stockton in the *Congress* and had displayed extraordinary gallantry and endurance in performing shore duty in California, passed through the city of Mexico on his way home from Mazatlan. He had been sent by Commodore Jones, commanding the Pacific squadron, with despatches which announced the discoveries, and he also carried with him specimens of the gold which were exhibited in September in New York.[1] But neither in Washington nor in Mexico was there any hint in the spring of 1848 of the epoch-making fact of gold in California.

Such, then, was the condition of affairs when the American commissioners to secure ratification of the treaty arrived in Mexico. Writing from Vera Cruz on the day of his arrival, Clifford informed the State Department that the opinions of the most intelligent persons he had met "would authorize the belief that there is every disposition in the Mexican government to ratify the treaty without delay."[2] From Mexico he wrote ten days later that the prevailing opinion was that the treaty would be ratified soon after the meeting of Congress, and that the amendments to the treaty as published in the New York *Herald* had been reproduced in the newspapers of Mexico and appeared not to have excited the least opposition.[3]

By this time preparations were in progress for getting Congress together. Elections for members had been held under a presidential decree of March 24, 1848, and the legislatures of the several states had cast their votes for Presi-

[1] Gold is said to have been found as early as 1820 in California, but not in paying quantities.—(Bancroft, *California*, II, 417.) Bancroft gives detailed accounts of the great discovery by Marshall on Sutter's mill race in January, 1848, and of the rush to the mines which followed in May and June.—(*California*, VI, 32–96.) Official despatches (some of which Beale carried) are printed in H. R. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 53–64. As to Beale's exploits and journey through Mexico, see Stephen Bonsal, *Edward Fitzgerald Beale*, 5–46.

[2] Clifford to Buchanan, April 2, 1848; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 54.

[3] Same to same, April 12, 1848; *ibid.*, 55.

dent. It was known that a majority were in favor of General Herrera.

At length, on the third of May, a quorum was assembled at Querétaro for the transaction of business; but the American commissioners, Clifford and Sevier, still remained in the city of Mexico. They had written officially announcing their arrival and expressing their desire to go to Querétaro to present their credentials, but their going had been delayed by an unwillingness on the part of the Mexicans to permit an American military escort; and finally the commissioners were unofficially informed through General Mora that it would be better they should not go to Querétaro until the time came for exchanging ratifications.[1]

At the opening of the Mexican Congress, the President's message dealt chiefly with the question of the ratification of the treaty. He expressed himself as convinced that the cession of territory was less than might have been expected, and he quoted President Polk's message of December 6, 1847, as showing that any treaty with the United States was utterly out of the question if it did not provide for the cession of the territories of California and New Mexico. In other respects he believed that the treaty was highly satisfactory and would be so regarded when submitted to the judgment of the national representatives of public opinion and to the verdict of foreign nations.

"The armistice which followed the negotiation of the treaty, and the immediate re-establishment of constitutional order in all its branches; the ample guarantees secured to Mexican citizens who, either holding that character or that of American citizens, should reside in the territories ceded; the suppression of the Indian tribes which should make incursions upon our frontier; the indemnity of fifteen millions of dollars, and the payment to be made by the government of the United States for claims liquidated and pending against the republic; the solemn promise to assuage, if at any time there shall be occasion, the calamities of war, as well as to respect the well known rights of humanity and of society; and finally, the closing stipulation

[1] See correspondence on this point in H. R. Doc. 50, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 57–61. The Mexican government was evidently anxious to avoid any appearance of acting under the direct influence of the American representatives.

that the dividing line established by the fifth article shall never be changed except by the full consent of both republics, expressed through their general governments in conformity with their respective constitutions; these considerations give to the negotiation all the dignity as well as all the security that could be demanded in this class of transactions."

On the other hand, the President expressed his regret that modifications should have been proposed by the Senate of the United States; but he considered that these amendments were not of such importance as to call for a rejection of the treaty, as he was satisfied that no negotiation could be concluded upon a basis more favorable to the republic of Mexico.

"It is no vain fear," he continued, "much less an unfavorable estimate of the moral and physical strength of the Mexican people, which compels me to decide in favor of peace. Nothing could be more unfounded. I have lived long enough to witness the heroic efforts which the nation made to sustain an unequal contest of eleven years, and at last achieve its independence. In the same civil war, I was able to observe the resources and elements of that people which acts with valor and energy. In the foreign war we have just witnessed, though in but few engagements, witness the courage and firmness of our soldiers, when commanded by chiefs of honor, and in whom they had confidence; and we have all remarked that the war would have had altogether a different result had the army and the national guards been properly organised. I have never believed, neither do I now believe, that the republic is absolutely incapable of continuing the war, and affording an example which might be transmitted with glory to posterity. But with the same frankness and good faith, I must say that I am convinced that the condition in which we are, with all its attendant circumstances, imperiously calls for peace."[1]

A few days later the treaty and the papers accompanying it were submitted to Congress accompanied by detailed verbal explanations from General Anaya, then Minister of War, in regard to the condition of the army and the impossibility of effectually continuing hostilities if the treaty were rejected. He was followed by Rosa, the Minister of Relations, who was also in charge of the Treasury, and who dis-

[1] *Message of the Provisional President of the Republic, D. Manuel de la Peña y Peña*, &c. (translation); *ibid.*, 62–72. The translation is evidently very awkward, but doubtless literally accurate.

cussed the financial situation of the country and the causes which had determined the government to conclude a peace, and explained the treaty provisions; and thereupon the treaty was submitted to the Committees on Foreign Relations of the two houses.

On May 13, 1848, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Chamber of Deputies presented its report in favor of ratification. Nine members in the house spoke against the treaty and six in favor of it, besides the Minister of Relations, and the report of the committee was approved on May 19, 1848, by a vote of 51 to 35.[1]

It was known that the Senate contained an overwhelming majority in favor of ratification, and therefore, as soon as the Chamber of Deputies had voted, the Minister of Relations wrote to Clifford and Sevier that they could come to Querétaro whenever they liked and present their credentials to the President. The American commissioners, upon receiving Rosa's intimation, set out for Querétaro.[2] They reached their destination at about five o'clock in the afternoon of May 25 and found the city "in a great state of exultation; fireworks going off, and bands of music parading in every direction."[3] The cause of this popular rejoicing was the fact that the Senate had that afternoon, about an hour before Clifford and Sevier arrived, voted for ratification by 33 to 4.[4]

It would seem, however, that the satisfaction in the city was not quite so universal as this statement might make it appear. According to Lieutenant Wise, of the United States navy, who was in Querétaro before and after the arrival of the American commissioners, the people in the streets threw

[1] Roa Bárcena, 623; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 394, where the names of the deputies voting for and against ratification are given.

[2] Rosa to Sevier and Clifford, May 19, 1848; H. R. Doc. 50, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 73. Sevier and Clifford to Buchanan (two despatches Nos. 8 and 9), May 21, 1848; *ibid.*, 73.

[3] Same to same, May 25, 1848; *ibid.*, 74.

[4] The names of the four senators voting against ratification are given in *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 395. Extracts from the report of the Senate committee, which was drawn by D. José Fernando Ramírez, will be found in Roa Bárcena, 624–626.

stones at the commissioners' carriages and cries of *Viva la guerra! Abajo la paz!* were heard in every direction. There was, however, no actual outbreak.[1]

The next few days were devoted to official visits and receptions, of which Lieutenant Wise gives an entertaining account. He thus describes the principal Mexican officials:

"The President Peña y Peña pleased me more than his advisers, having a mild, benignant expression, and evidently appeared worn down with care and anxiety. Anaya was a tall, bony person, with high cheek-bones—denoting his Indian origin—and a stolid striped face. Rosa, the Secretary of War, was short of stature, of swarthy complexion, with full, dark, intelligent eyes. But of all the public characters, who held office under the Mexican government, whom I had the opportunity of seeing, there was none who struck me so forcibly as one of the deputies—Señor Couto."[2]

There was some delay in exchanging ratifications which, according to the same author, was due to the fact that Herrera was unwilling to take office until after the treaty was signed, and Peña's ministry was unwilling to go out until they could be sure of getting the three million dollars to be paid on the exchange of ratifications into their own hands; and there was also some discussion in regard to the American cavalry and artillery returning to the United States by land.[3] If any such reasons existed, they were not reported by Sevier and Clifford.

The Mexican government also insisted upon a formal explanation in regard to the meaning and effect of the amendments to the treaty made by the United States Senate. These explanations were embodied in a protocol which was dated May 26, 1848, and which ends with the words:

"And these explanations having been accepted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Mexican republic, he declared, in the name of his Government, that with the understanding conveyed by them the

[1] Wise, *Los Gringos*, 267.

[2] *Ibid.*, 269. Couto, who had been one of the Mexican commissioners who framed the treaty, was always spoken of by Americans and Englishmen in terms of the highest respect. Rosa was Secretary of Relations—not War.

[3] *Ibid.*, 273.

same Government would proceed to ratify the treaty of Guadalupe, as modified by the Senate and Government of the U. States."[1]

At last, on May 30, 1848, the ratifications were duly exchanged, and the American commissioners returned to the city of Mexico for the purpose of paying over the three million dollars according to the stipulations of the treaty and to arrange with General Butler for the retirement of the American troops.[2]

On the same day that the ratifications were exchanged, the Mexican Congress declared that General Herrera had been duly elected President of the Mexican republic;[3] on the next day the election of Señor Peña y Peña as president of the Supreme Court of Justice was likewise proclaimed; and on the third of June Herrera was inaugurated, after having twice expressed an unwillingness to assume the duties of the Presidency.[4] A few days afterward the business of Congress was completed, and it adjourned to meet again in the city of Mexico in the following July.[5] Herrera meanwhile had appointed a new set of ministers, and he and they took up their residence on the eighth of June in the village of Mixcoac, close to the capital, where they remained awaiting the evacuation of the city by the American troops.[6]

The arrangements for the withdrawal of Butler's army had been for some time in progress in anticipation of the ratification of the treaty, and the march to the sea was soon begun. By the morning of June 12 Worth's division, which was the last to leave, was drawn up in front of the palace; the American flag, saluted by both American and Mexican batteries, was hauled down; the Mexican tricolor was hoisted with similar salutes; and by nine o'clock in the

[1] *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States of America and Other Powers* (Edition, 1910); Dublan y Lozano, V, 379–380. The effect of this protocol was the subject of subsequent diplomatic correspondence which extended over a considerable time.

[2] Sevier and Clifford to Buchanan, May 30, 1848; H. R. Doc. 50, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 75.

[3] Dublan y Lozano, V, 380.

[4] *Ibid.*, 381.

[5] Law of June 6, 1848; *ibid.*, 381.

[6] *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 711.

morning the capital was evacuated without popular disturbance—the necessary police arrangements having been carefully made by the Americans in consultation with the Mexican authorities. On July 30 the city of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan de Ulúa were delivered over to the Mexicans, and at almost the same time Tampico was likewise evacuated.

But though the capital remained quiet disturbances occurred elsewhere. Before the American troops were out of the country a Royalist pronunciamiento was issued by the priest Padre Jarauta—who had been the most efficient leader of the guerilleros in the states of Vera Cruz and Puebla—in which the chief ground put forward for destroying the government was that it had "betrayed the nation." The movement was really under the leadership of ex-President Paredes. It met with some success at first in the states of Jalisco and Guanajuato, but the government acted with unusual promptitude; Jarauta was taken and shot on July 18, near the city of Guanajuato; Paredes escaped and fled the country, probably with the connivance of the government: and for some months longer Mexico was at peace.

The subsequent liberation of the territory and the appointment of Clifford as minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary, marked the final and complete resumption of friendly relations between the United States and Mexico—relations which have now continued unbroken for close upon two-thirds of a century.

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It has not been the purpose of this work to pass moral judgments upon the conduct of those whose actions have been described, but rather to endeavor to state the relevant facts and allow these to speak for themselves. But so much has been written in regard to the conduct of the United States toward Mexico, that it appears desirable to call attention once more to two assertions which have been per-

sistently reiterated, and which have very little foundation in fact.

In the first place, it has been said that the annexation of Texas to the United States was due to a conspiracy, formed at least ten or fifteen years before annexation was complete, the object of which was to extend the area of slavery so as to include the whole of that undeveloped territory. The evidence, however, is quite clear that the first occupation of Texas by settlers from the United States was due to circumstances with which the leaders of public opinion in the South had nothing to do, and that prior to the defeat of the Mexican army by the Texans at San Jacinto there was no combined or organized movement on the part of any political faction in the United States to encourage annexation. The movement for annexation, when it began, began in Texas itself; and it was carried through, not by the South, but rather by the people of the whole Mississippi valley. There was at all times a strong minority in the South, and especially in the south Atlantic states, which was opposed to the annexation of Texas for the very good reason that it was feared the effect of annexation would be to increase the fast-growing Northern sentiment against slavery.

It has also been frequently asserted that the war was forced upon Mexico for the purpose of acquiring additional slave territory. So far as this relates to Texas, the accusation is evidently untrue. Texas had been invited by the United States to enter the Union more than a year before the war broke out, and its formal acceptance of the invitation was given ten months prior to the commencement of hostilities. In a sense the war may indeed be regarded as a war of conquest; for although the executive of the United States steadily denied this accusation, and asserted that it was prosecuted solely in order to obtain payment for debts due to the United States and for injuries done its citizens, the fact remains that it had always been the intention of the administration to obtain such payment by a cession of territory belonging to the Mexican republic. But that territory was not Texas. It was New Mexico and California—especially

California. Andrew Jackson as President, and Van Buren and Webster as Secretaries of State, had made efforts to obtain the cession of at least a part of California, and expansion on the Pacific coast was foremost in the minds of President Polk and his associates in their whole conduct of the war. Polk, however, asserted, and no doubt believed, that slavery would never exist in New Mexico or California, and in this opinion Calhoun expressed his concurrence.

Whatever may be thought of the abstract morality of a war begun for the purpose of acquiring territory, it is certain that the practice of civilized nations prior to the middle of the nineteenth century was not opposed to it; and there were many circumstances which rendered the conquest of California relatively justifiable. Its owners and inhabitants had utterly failed to develop the natural resources of the country, and every justification which could attend the settlement by European nations of countries inhabited by uncivilised races, or which could be offered to excuse the expansion of the United States over Indian territory, would in principle apply to the conquest of California by the United States.

More than that, the conduct of the United States in regard to California was supported by an exact precedent. The acquisition of the Floridas from Spain had been sought for upon grounds precisely similar, namely, the indebtedness of Spain to the United States for outrages committed upon American citizens, her inability to pay money, the "derelict" condition of the country in question, and the urgent desire of the United States for expansion. The only material difference between the two cases was that the Floridas were necessarily slave territory, while there was no such necessity in the case of California. The fact that Spain was prudent enough to yield to the threats of the United States is, strictly speaking, immaterial; for it cannot be doubted that the United States would sooner or later have found occasion for going to war with Spain and taking the Floridas, if Spain had not consented to enter into the treaty of 1819. Mexico, on the other hand, refused to yield to

forces which every one else saw were irresistible, and she persisted in a hopeless and disastrous effort to retain territories which she was wholly unable either to develop or to protect.

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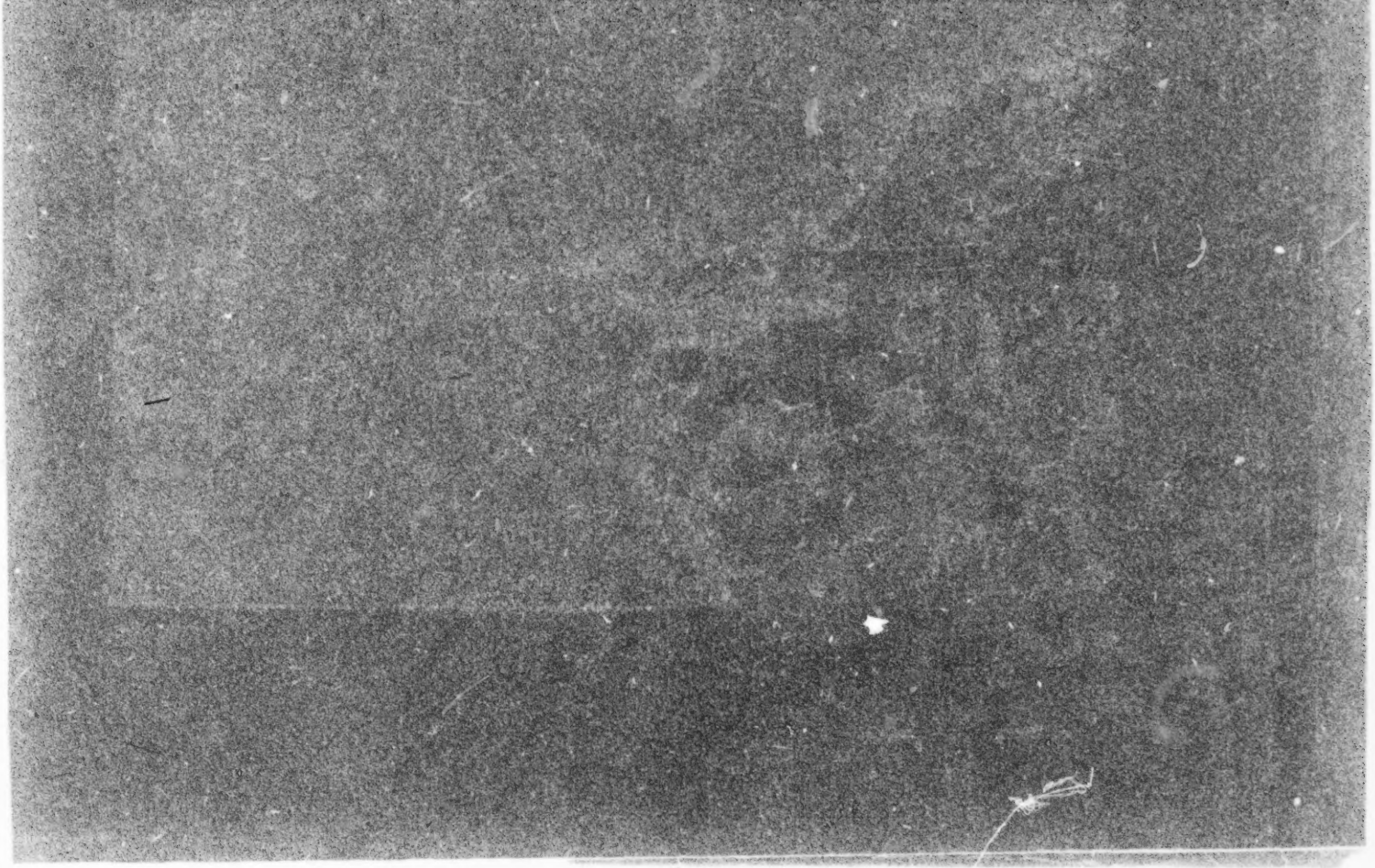

Longitude West from Greenwich